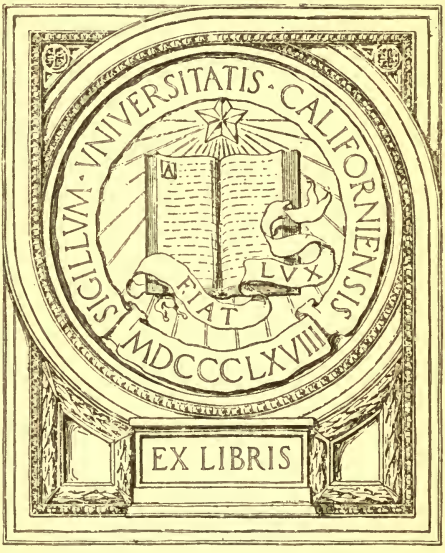
GREAT SPIRITUAL WRITERS OF AMERICA

GEORGE HAMLIN FITCH



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Walt Whitman
Etched by Jacques Reich from Whitman's
last Photograph taken by Thomas
Eakins of Philadelphia

GREAT SPIRITUAL WRITERS OF AMERICA

BY

GEORGE HAMLIN FITCH

AUTHOR OF
"COMFORT FOUND IN GOOD OLD BOOKS"
"MODERN ENGLISH BOOKS OF POWER"
"THE CRITIC IN THE OCCIDENT"
"THE CRITIC IN THE ORIENT"

Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force; that thoughts rule the world.—Emerson: Progress of Culture.



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DEDICATED
TO ALL THOSE WHO
HAVE FOUND INSPIRATION IN
AMERICAN MEN OF
LETTERS

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Introduction

THIS little book is intended to round out and complete the studies in literature already issued in "Comfort Found in Good Old Books" and "Modern English Books of Power." The first of these was written to show that the only abiding solace in grief is to be found in good old books, which as consolers surpass even the oldest and truest of friends. It was also written to demonstrate that real culture does not depend upon a college education, but may be gained by anyone who has a genuine love of good literature. The second volume was designed as a guide to those who wish to read the best of the great modern English authors from Macaulay to Hardy and Kipling. Its essential feature was that no one should attempt to read all the works of any author, but that two or three of the most characteristic works of an author are all that is necessary to give a good estimate of his genius. Upon these as a basis one may work until he has read practically all that has been written by the great modern English authors.

In this third book I have selected representative American authors who in my judgment best illustrate the national genius. The limits of the book make it imperative to include only a few of the greatest writers. Some critics have contended that there is no real American literature, as most of our writers have simply imitated English models. Ground there may have been for such criticism in the early days of the nation, but with Washington Irving began what may be called a distinctive literature, and this was enriched by a strong native genius like Walt Whitman, a rare creative poet and romancer like Poe, and a master of tragic spiritual drama like Hawthorne. It may be literary heresy, but to my mind Emerson is a far more stimulating literary force than Carlyle, Cooper a finer story-teller than most of his English contemporaries, while Lowell, Holmes, Parkman, Bret Harte and Mark Twain have a racy national quality and a creative literary power that set them apart and make them well worth study. Of these, the next century will probably appraise Mark Twain as the greatest, for aside from being the finest humorist that America has produced, he will also take rank among the greatest story-tellers of all ages.

My aim in this book has been to arouse interest in these great American writers who are so little known to most readers and to indicate their best works. Certainly no true American can afford to be ignorant of the writers who have made our literature known to the world. And this is especially true in these dark days, when the United States stands alone as the only great civilized power that is not striving to gain territory or some other advantage from the nations now locked fast in the most desperate and destructive war of all history.

Spirit of American Literature

The Vital Force Found in the New Religion Of Democracy — Emerson, Whitman and Mark Twain Its Great Apostles.

AMERICAN literature has been hurt more by its friends than by its enemies. Jeffrey's sneering query, "Who reads an American book?" was not so deadly as the praise by historians of our literature of such unreadable works as Judd's "Margaret." In dealing with literature, why waste time or energy on books that have no claim as real literature? Hundreds of books are issued every year that serve their purpose as text books and manuals of reference; other hundreds serve to amuse readers; but if a year sees the publication of a real book, full of the genuine spiritual quality that ensures immortality, then that year is worthy of being marked in red letters. In the history of any literature it is astonishing to find how few are the books that may be called immortal.

In this analysis of great American writers, many readers may find that I have omitted several of their favorite authors. Such omissions are unavoidable because among hundreds of contemporary writers, it is difficult to select those who best represent the national spirit. Of the great names in American literature — Emerson, Whitman, Irving, Cooper, Poe, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Mark Twain, Bret Harte and Howells — not one can be omitted. Of the others, some substantial reasons are given for selecting Parkman and Edwin Markham.

Every one of these authors gives ample proof in his best works of that spiritual quality which is the unfailing test of immortality. In this new world, where material development claimed men's attention and absorbed their energies for two centuries, the wonder is that anything like an original literature should have taken root even after two hundred years. Only the influence of the strong new thought germinated by the Declaration of Independence wrought this miracle of a genuine national literature. Colonies do not produce literature, as may be seen in the history of Australia and Canada. Even republics, like those of South

America, which are only oligarchies masquerading under the symbols of freedom, have proved sterile in real literature.

The man who drafted the Declaration of Independence and his associates who helped to make it a reality, laid broad and enduring the foundations of American literature. From it, as from the experiments that have been made since this government was made an actual fact, has sprung a literature distinct from any that the world has ever known. American ideals, although they have been slow to be recognized by skeptical Europe, are as distinct from anything found in the Old World as American life is distinct from that of England, France or Germany of today. It is only within the memory of the present generation that the United States has come to be recognized as a world power. England and Germany looked upon our experiment in the Philippines as a bit of altruism which would soon be changed to a regular selfish colonial government like that of India or Southwest Africa. They regarded our action in returning the Boxer indemnity to China and our refusal to seize any Chinese territory, as national idealism, which was inconsistent with real patriotism. The course of the United States in this great European war is

not understood abroad. It is as great a mystery as our generosity in feeding the Belgians. This is not strange when we see the astonishing spectacle of nations like Italy, Greece and Roumania bargaining for territory with both sides in the present conflict.

President Wilson has voiced in eloquent words this new American doctrine of the Golden Rule as applied to national affairs, but in all the European chancelleries his genuine idealism is regarded as mere rhetoric. Diplomats who have grown gray inventing devices to overreach their opponents cannot be made to believe that the doctrines of Christ may be applied to the affairs of nations. In fact, they look upon American diplomacy with that polite condescension which is more annoying than open unbelief. Yet anyone who knows American life accepts without question the President's words as typical of American public opinion. The course of this government in the present war is simply the natural development of that religion of democracy preached by Emerson, Whitman and Mark Twain — the three greatest original forces in American literature. You will not find any believers in that religion in the Old World, except a few idealists who are looked upon as dangerous cranks. Only one

man with the real American spirit has come to the front in the great emergency produced by this war. That is Lloyd George, the English Minister of Munitions, who has upset all the cherished traditions of British government, but has gained in influence and popularity. He is the only public man who has had the courage to warn the British nation of its peril caused by incompetency among its rulers. His is the only voice which has denounced the incredible selfishness of the British labor unions in checking the production of munitions and thus causing the waste of thousands of brave soldiers and millions of money. Lloyd George represents real American democracy in its battle with the long intrenched forces of a selfish oligarchy of the privileged classes.

American literature, as seen in its great spiritual writers, is simply the logical working out of the forces that were first put into eloquent words by Thomas Jefferson. The warfare upon privilege, the throwing wide open of the gates of opportunity to every man who proves his capacity, no matter what his birth or social station, the encouragement of the poor boy to seek an education that will lift him out of the ranks of the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, the enforce-

ment of the doctrine that manual labor brings no shame or reproach and that a gentleman may be a gentleman although he works with his hands and wears no gloves — these are the vital, fundamental truths which all the great American writers have preached in their works, whether in prose or verse. And their words have had potency and power because they represent the convictions of millions of plain Americans, whom wealth cannot spoil.

Emerson was the first American writer to put these great truths into words that have everlasting life. His noteworthy address, The American Scholar, *has probably had more direct influence upon young Americans than any other single piece of our literature. It aroused Walt Whitman and led to the production of his "Leaves of Grass" and his prose declaration of literary independence. Whitman's utterances were denounced by conservative critics, but many of the foremost American and English writers of his day welcomed his work as a strong, new note in literature.*

This religion of democracy, preached by Emerson and Whitman, found one of its most eloquent disciples in our day in Mark Twain. Long regarded merely as a humor-

ist, Mark Twain came into his own kingdom more than twenty years ago, and today he is recognized by the best critics as among the foremost of American authors. Sprung from the people, with no early advantages, his literary genius forced him to abandon the work of a Mississippi river pilot in which he had achieved success, and to devote himself to literary work. A hater of all social distinctions, of all shams and pretences, Mark Twain was the most eloquent advocate of democracy of his age. His "Huckleberry Finn" may be recognized by the next century as the great American novel for which the Wise Men of Literature have watched for so many years.

All the authors whose works are discussed in this volume are distinctly American. All have the spiritual quality so strongly developed that even the careless reader feels its powerful influence behind their words. All were passionate believers in the literature which they helped to make famous. And not one of them will fail to give rich results in culture and enjoyment as the consequence of the study of his work.

GREAT SPIRITUAL WRITERS OF AMERICA

Emerson
The Literary Pioneer

His Essays, Full of Splendid Optimism, Stimulated Whitman and Many Other American Writers.

Ralph Waldo Emerson deserves the first place in any survey of American literature. Without him, American writers would have continued for another generation the imitation of English models. He pronounced the declaration of American literary independence as Jefferson drafted the declaration of our political independence. Whitman acknowledged his debt to Emerson, and Whitman, whatever his faults, is still our most original man of letters. Emerson also has had a more vital influence on young readers and on college students than any other American writer. The years that have relegated so many of his contemporaries to the top

shelf have not lessened his popularity. His books still sell by the thousand and they are read eagerly by young Americans of all classes. To the young man or woman, forced to work for a living and struggling at night to get an education, Emerson is a tower of strength. His words are a stimulus which cannot be measured; he gives spiritual comfort that girds up the loins of the lonely student.

Above all, in this material age, Emerson comes with a message which appeals powerfully to youth, which has not lost its ideals. His has been the duty to keep alive the high, unselfish purposes of the scholar in these days when wealth and power seek to seduce the ablest of young Americans. He is the High Priest of the spiritual who passes along the torch of culture to the hands of the younger generations.

Emerson was one of the few American authors whose mere presence impressed any assembly. Though never given to posing, so great was his personal force and so high the distinction of his face and his manner that all gave him homage. And the wonder of this tribute was that the man himself was absolutely detached from the things of this world. As he himself so

well expressed it, he saw even the people in his own household "as across a gulf." He had the detachment of great genius. He had no intimates and he never made any effort to cultivate friendships. His indifference to the work of his contemporaries of genius was profound and disconcerting. Thus he never could read any of Hawthorne's exquisite tales, and he could not even appreciate *The Scarlet Letter*, which, with some of his own essays. has been given by critics the highest place in the Pantheon of American literary achievement.

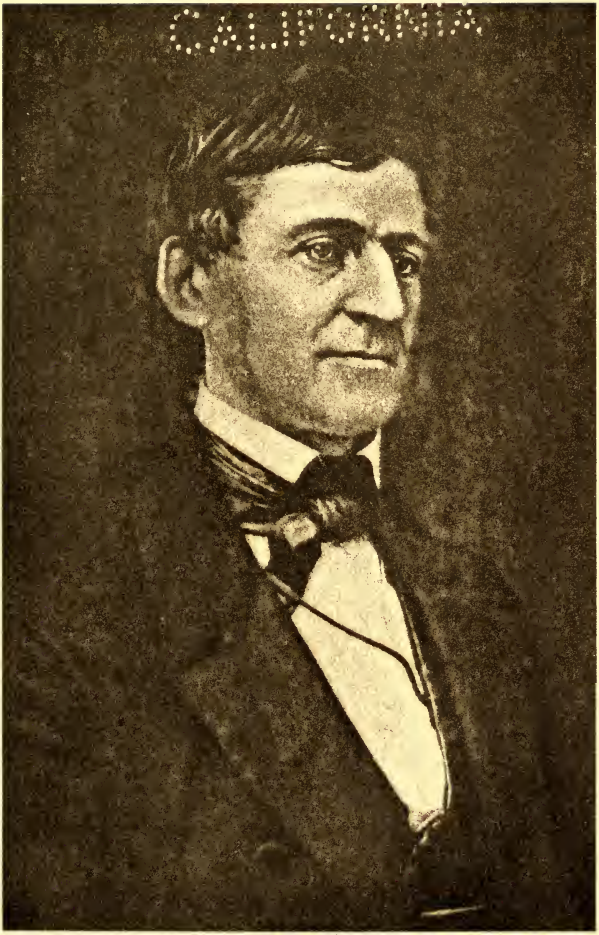
To treat Emerson like the ordinary writer of essays is to mistake his vocation. He is a seer and a prophet; but above all he is the greatest teacher and inspirer of thought and work this country has ever known. And it is as a teacher that his fame will endure. His essays are merely the elaboration of the lectures and addresses which he delivered before college and lyceum audiences, in an age when the desire for culture was as eager as is now the desire for money and pleasure. The Puritan conscience had not lost its keen edge when Emerson was in his prime, and it was his great distinction that he could

appeal to this conscience with a force and a directness possessed by no other writer or lecturer of his day.

Absolutely free from all religious restrictions, Emerson yet laid down the moral law with a power that moves one still, as it once swayed and stimulated New England audiences. The men of today of larger culture and greater literary skill may marvel at Emerson's influence, but it endures, and American school and college youth of our day feel the force of Emerson's vitalizing words, with almost the same kindling power that moved those who sat at his feet and looked upon his face when visions came to him and were revealed to those who had not his outlook upon the Promised Land.

So Emerson is one of the few great authors whose work must be tasted, not eaten. He is like caviare to the great reading public, because he is merely a stimulus to thought. His essays must be taken in small doses, lest one have a surfeit of their richness of condensed thought. To read Emerson continuously, as one reads Macaulay or even Carlyle, is fatal; as well try to digest the intellectual pemmican of Bacon's essays. Emerson's essays,

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Ralph Waldo Emerson
From a Daguerreotype taken for Carlyle
in May, 1846

which, with *Representative Men*, contain all his best work, are to be regarded as stimulants to the intellectual life. They are to be read by single pages, or, better, by single passages. Oftentimes a single sentence will give one food for thought. And the remarkable feature of Emerson is that he seems to have an answer for all one's needs, just as the Bible has; for his was a primitive nature that stripped away all conventions and dared to look on life with the eyes of a pagan, unafraid and unashamed. He is as elemental as the writer of the Book of Job.

Emerson lived an uneventful life, but it is difficult to imagine the New England of sixty years ago without his dominating figure. He came of a family of preachers and he was bred for the church. He gained no distinction in college, which he entered at the early age of fifteen years, save that he won a second prize for English composition in his senior year. He attended a divinity school, but weakness of the eyes excused him from taking notes in class and from entering examinations. As he remarked later in life, with dry humor, "If they had examined me they probably would not have let me preach at

all." When twenty-three years old he was authorized to preach, but weak lungs drove him to the milder climate of South Carolina and Florida. In Charleston he preached several times, and on his return he was ordained as colleague of Dr. Ware in the Second Church of Boston.

Three years later Emerson caused a great sensation by preaching a sermon in which he expressed doubts of his right to administer communion and his determination to resign his pastorate. The following year he went to Europe and saw many famous literary men, notably Carlyle, whom he visited for a week at his lonesome Scotch retreat at Craigenputtock. In the following year he returned to Concord, Massachusetts, and began the career of lecturing and writing which was to continue for fifty years.

Emerson was among the first of the New England lecturers who established the lyceum system that endured for more than half a century and was one of the most important factors in popular education in this country. Emerson's first lectures were on his experiences in Europe. Then he took up the biographies of great men, several of these lectures appearing after-

ward in *Representative Men*, a book that is as vital and suggestive as Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*. Then followed a series of lectures before academies and lyceums on such subjects as *English Literature*, *The Philosophy of History* and *Human Culture*.

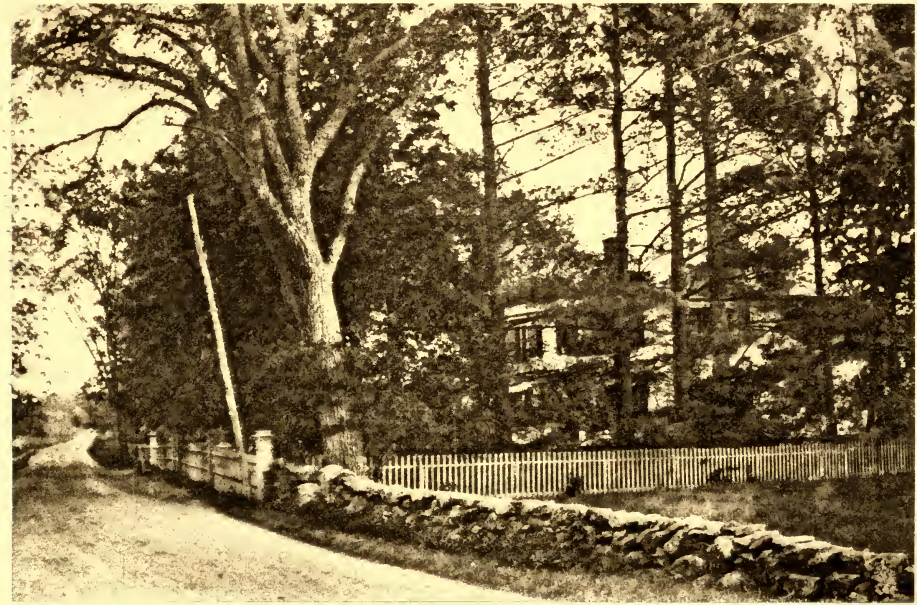
His first book, entitled *Nature*, appeared anonymously in 1836 and was welcomed by all scholars, but it was not until the following year that Emerson gained great vogue and was recognized as a leader of American thought. *The American Scholar*, his Phi Beta Kappa oration at Harvard in August, 1837, was really the starting point of his career. It may be read with profit in these days, when the noble ideals for which Emerson pleaded so eloquently are apt to be forgotten in the fierce desire for money and success.

From this period Emerson advanced with strength and confidence. He continued to deliver lectures that stimulated while they puzzled his audiences, and the seed thoughts of these lectures he put into his books. Also he wrote poems full of beautiful thoughts, cast in language which is frequently not poetical. He was a voluminous writer, and by 1850 he was

firmly established as the foremost figure in every American movement for free thought and free speech. He preached the doctrine of culture in an age when education was the hobby of most teachers, and he laid down the law that no amount of knowledge will ever bring culture. His voice was always raised for the greatest tolerance in religion and the largest liberty in speech.

Thus Emerson came to be the recognized head of all the New England ethical movements that have fertilized thought in this country and inspired high ideals. What this country owes to him can never be estimated. His statue should be placed in every large American city, so that the younger generation may see that the people recognize Emerson as our greatest apostle of free thought and the intellectual life.

You cannot go amiss in reading his essays. Begin with that immortal address on *The American Scholar*, and then take up any of the essays that appeals to you. Read it by single pages, and look up any references that are not clear. Think over the things that Emerson lays down as laws. You will find nearly every page full



The Home of
Ralph Waldo Emerson
From a Photograph
by A. Hosmer

of meat. But do not commit the folly of attempting to read Emerson as you would read Lowell or Whipple or Stedman. He is not consecutive, and disgust will be your portion. Take him as you would take a tonic, in small doses, and you will find him an extraordinary stimulant to work and thought, better than any other writer, unless it be Carlyle at his best.

And you will find that this man, who apparently took no count of style, has a style that is unrivaled for terseness, force and beauty. As Lowell so well says, "His eye for a fine, telling phrase that will carry true is like that of a backwoodsman for a rifle, and he will dredge up a choice word from the mud of Cotton Mather himself." Emerson charged every word with meaning. He wrote with the condensed force of the Latin, but he used the simple words, the homespun phrases that go straight to the American heart.

Walt Whitman
The Prophet in His Shirt-sleeves

Most Original of All American Writers — He Defied Conventionality and Paid the Full Penalty.

Walt Whitman is the most original of American authors in form, in thought, and in expression. Yet he is a fine instance of the prophet who is not without honor save in his own country. From the time that Whitman issued his *Leaves of Grass* he had far more readers and admirers in England than in this country. It is only within the last few years that interest in Whitman and his work has extended in America beyond mere curiosity. Even now it is rare to find well-read Americans who have any close acquaintance with Whitman's work, especially with the prose sketches which he wrote in his later years and which con-

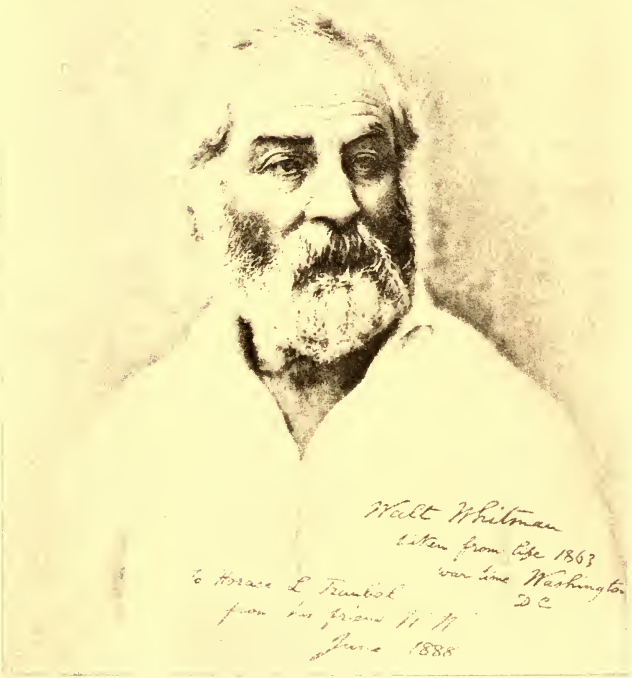
tain some of his best thought. Most Americans seem content to read articles about Whitman instead of reading his verse and prose.

Walt Whitman could have developed in no other country than this. With small school education, he labored for many years to gather the curious information which may be found scattered through his works. He never could lay any claim to scholarship, but he certainly gained as thorough a knowledge of the great writers of classical and modern times as any reader of English alone could secure. And he appraised all these writers in his own way, uninfluenced by the opinions of critics or admirers. From each he drew some measure of stimulus or inspiration, and his criticism of their literary value is always well worth reading.

The development of Walt Whitman's genius is one of the curiosities of literature. Here was a stolid, lymphatic boy, of more than ordinary physical strength, yet of great deliberation of movement, who was endowed with a high-strung nervous system. The result was that in early youth he was swept by desires and sensations which he could not understand. Often the

presence of others could not be endured. Then he would make trips to the woods or the seashore, where in undisturbed solitude he was able to read and enjoy the world's great masterpieces. Constant brooding over the desire to produce a book in which a real man's passion and thought should be mirrored, induced a kind of mystic state in which the body remained inert, while the mind seemed to gain absolute freedom and to work in space. Something of the same result is achieved by the East Indian mystics after long cultivation of the power of self-hypnosis. That much of Whitman's first work was produced under these conditions seems certain. In no other way can one explain the sense of exaltation that carries him along and that gives to his long resounding lines something of the rhythmical sweep of waves on the seashore.

Nothing in Whitman's early life can explain his curious mental development or the first fruits of it — *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman was of mixed English and Dutch stock; he spent most of his early years in a peaceful village of Long Island; his early impressions were of rural sights and sounds and of the seashore, which always pro-



Walt Whitman
From a Photograph by Gardner, Washington
In Possession of Horace L. Traubel, Esq.

foundly appealed to him. After a common school education he became a printer and for ten years either worked at the case or wrote for various publications. In these formative years he wrote many stories and sketches which were merely imitations of work that he had read. He varied his literary occupations with teaching and with work at his father's trade of carpentering; but through all these apprentice years he was an eager devourer of books, a constant attendant at the theater and the opera, and a close student of the life of New York streets, of which he never tired.

At the mature age of thirty-five years, he suddenly dropped all other activities and devoted himself to writing his great work, which was to be unique in the fact that it included the cosmic life of man. But Whitman did not don singing robes and produce his poem out of the fulness of thought and emotion. He labored over it with painstaking care, rewriting most of it no less than five times before it satisfied him. He also wrote a long preface in which he tried to demonstrate the principles of a national literature. He could have rewritten this preface with profit, as

many passages are so filled with the spirit of a vague transcendentalism that it is difficult to grasp their meaning.

Whitman wrought on additional poems to his *Leaves of Grass* until the second year of the war. Then the news that his younger brother, who had volunteered, was wounded, took him to Washington. He found his brother only slightly hurt, but the spectacle of the thousands of wounded borne to improvised hospitals at the capital profoundly moved Whitman. He determined to stay in Washington and do something to help these wounded soldier boys. Many he found suffering from homesickness: these he cheered. Every day he carried into the hospitals in a haversack little necessaries and comforts, letter paper, envelopes and stamps. When a man could not write, Whitman wrote letters for him. This service he continued for months, and the testimony of many who witnessed his work was that his mere presence, his magnetic speech and touch, were far more effective than medicines. Out of this work came his truest book—*Drum Taps*—in which was afterwards included his splendid tributes to Lincoln, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed* and *O Captain, My Captain!*

A desk in the Indian Bureau Whitman secured early in 1865, and the salary allowed him to carry on his work among the soldiers. The unspeakable bigotry of James Harlan, then Secretary of the Interior, cost Whitman his position, as the Secretary declared he would not keep in office the author of an indecent book. But the poet was immediately transferred to the United States Attorney's department, and the incident would have been forgotten but for the championship of W. D. O'Connor, a warm friend, who in a pamphlet entitled *The Good Gray Poet* defended Whitman and held Harlan up to public scorn. The result was unfortunate for Whitman, as it revived the discussion of what was merely an incidental feature of his poem.

His excessive work in the hospitals broke down Whitman's health and a paralytic stroke made him almost helpless for several months. But his insistence upon living in the open air and his sane methods of daily exercise finally worked a cure. Out of his close communion with Nature came a collection of prose sketches, called *Specimen Days and Collect*, which contains some of his best work.

Whitman's last years, when he was kept indoors by a recurrence of paralysis, were made memorable by the homage paid to him by many famous men. His home in Camden, New Jersey, was visited by hundreds, some of whom have left records of the wonderful effect produced by the simple inspiring presence of the aged poet. Whitman retained his faculties to the end; his death was serene, befitting the blameless life he had led for years.

Whitman's own definition of his purpose in writing *Leaves of Grass* was "to articulate and faithfully express in literary or poetic form, and uncompromisingly, my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual and esthetic Personality, in the midst of, and tallying, the momentous spirit and facts of its immediate days and of Current America." He also declares that he decided to omit all "stock poetical touches," all references to other poems, all allusions to the classics. He would admit any good expressive slang if it fitted his meaning. In a word, he proposed to write a poem which should be absolutely original, vitally American, and devoted to exploiting the nature, the hopes and the ambitions of a real man.

Judged by this standard, *Leaves of Grass* was a success. But the American public would have nothing of it and most of the critics condemned it utterly. Only Emerson, Edward Everett Hale, and a few other wise critics saw the great merits of the poem shining through its many defects. Undismayed by lack of public appreciation, Whitman soon got out a second and much enlarged edition of the book. He refused to soften or omit any of the passages filled with sexual imagery which offended Emerson and many of his friends. He declared that these objections were prudish and that he would rest his claim to fame on the work as he had written it — the full-blooded, declamatory expression of a Man's ideas of the universe. It is difficult to give a few lines that will convey the sense of the power of Love with which Whitman has flooded this poem, but these verses reveal him at his best as a lover of the earth:

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.
Press close, bare-bosom'd night—press close, magnetic nourishing night!
Night of south winds—night of the large few stars!
Still nodding night—mad naked summer night.

Smile, O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!

Earth of departed sunset — earth of the mountains misty-topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbow'd earth—rich apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.

Prodigal, you have given me love — therefore I to you give love!
O unspeakable passionate love.

But Walt Whitman revealed himself more truly in two minor books than in *Leaves of Grass*. One is *Drum-Taps*, of which Bliss Perry says it embodies "the very spirit of the civil conflict, picturing war with a poignant realism, a terrible and tender beauty, such as only the great masters of literature have been able to compass." The other, *Speciman Days and Collect*, is a collection of prose sketches which reveal the lover of man and nature without any rhetorical posing.

The Charm of Washington Irving

Genial Author of "The Sketch Book," the First American to Gain an International Reputation.

More than a half century ago I was a regular reader in the old Mercantile Library, then lodged over Platt's Hall, on Montgomery street, in San Francisco. One day the librarian showed me, with much pride, a handsome library edition of the works of Washington Irving, whose recent death had called out many tributes in the newspapers. He was unknown to me then, but I took out *The Sketch Book*, and, after devouring this with the keenest pleasure, I read all of Irving except the formidable seven-volume life of Washington. He opened a new world to me, for he made England real and he was the first to make me feel the charm of Moorish

Spain. He was also the first American author who gave me a sense of a fine literary style. A boy reads for matter, not for style, and it proves Irving's great qualities that he was able to impress a young reader with the charm of his style.

Irving was the first to demonstrate to Europe that in this new country had sprung up a genuine national literature. Scott, Byron and other competent critics declared that Irving's work was worthy of a place beside the best work of English authors. Many critics even attributed to Scott the authorship of *The Sketch Book*, which first appeared with Irving's identity concealed under the pen name of Geoffrey Crayon. Yet all admitted that here was a new note in literature — a note of simple, unstrained pathos, of keen sympathy with grief and suffering, of tenderness that is almost feminine in its intuition and charm, and of humor that has in it no malice and no sting.

Irving, who was born in 1783 and died in 1859, came of good Scotch and English stock. He derived his fancy and his literary tastes from his mother, the granddaughter of an English curate. From his tenth year he devoured books, having an especial liking for travel, fiction and poetry.



Washington Irving
At the Age of Twenty-seven
An Engraving from the Original Picture
by Jarvis

He did not go to college, but he enjoyed thorough legal training, although he never practiced his profession. He was singularly fortunate in the possession of means, so that when he was threatened with consumption he was able to take a European tour, which, in the opening years of the nineteenth century, was very expensive. In Rome he became an ardent friend of Washington Allston, the artist, and in Paris and London he formed many friendships with famous men and women. On his return to this country, in 1806, he began to devote himself to literature. Three years later he brought out Knickerbocker's *History of New York*, which made a great hit.

The death of Matilda Hoffman, the girl he loved and was to marry, proved a great shock, but he rallied after several months and devoted himself to society and writing. In 1815 he decided to go to Europe to see his brother Peter, but he remained for seventeen years, spending most of the time in travel. He met all the great personages of London and he was entertained at Abbottsford by Sir Walter Scott, of whom he has given the best picture in all literature. In 1819 appeared *The Sketch Book*,

which established Irving's reputation as an essayist. To Irving's great surprise, it had as notable a success in London as in New York, and it opened all doors to the handsome young American. Then followed in rapid succession *Bracebridge Hall*, a volume of sketches of English country life; *Tales of a Traveler*, *Life of Columbus*, *The Conquest of Granada* and *The Alhambra*. Irving was the first to bring out the romance of the Moorish conquest of Spain, and *The Alhambra* has been a classic for three-quarters of a century.

It was one of the bits of good fortune that are strung along the thread of Irving's life that he should have secured a patron in old John Jacob Astor. For this founder of one of the greatest American fortunes Irving wrote *Astoria*, the record of an unsuccessful attempt to found a fur-trading post on the far Pacific, and the *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, written from the talk of an old fur-trader and adventurer. Irving also wrote the lives of Washington and Mohammed, and he gathered material for a history of Mexico, but generously abandoned the project when he learned that his friend Prescott had decided to write of the conquest by Cortez. Irving

filled several diplomatic posts, the most noteworthy being that of American Minister to Spain from 1842 to 1846. He had a long and happy life, filled with work that he loved and with friendships that served to help him forget his lifelong sorrow.

To one who has not read Irving the best thing to take up first is *The Sketch Book*. This volume includes, besides a number of the most delightful essays and tales, two of his best short stories, *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, either of which would have made the reputation of any American writer. *Rip Van Winkle* was made familiar to every child in this country, thirty years ago, by Joe Jefferson's remarkable performance of the play, which he developed from the story. The other story is not so well known, but the picture of the headless horseman pursuing the lean and terrified Ichabod Crane is one which no reader will ever forget. In his *Sketch Book* Irving gave reminiscences of his early life, as well as many sketches of travel. In its style it reminds one of Addison, with a touch of warmth that the writer of *The Spectator* seldom puts into his work. The chapters, which range from a sketch of the long ocean voyage to Europe to

papers on *Christmas* and *Stratford-on-Avon*, all breathe a spirit of mellow culture that is rare in these strenuous days. Irving, by his reading, his travels and his social intercourse, developed a style that is well-nigh perfect in its limpid clearness, its varied charm and its literary quality. The man himself impresses one as finer and richer than anything which may be found in his books.

The other books which anyone wishing to know the real Irving should read are *Bracebridge Hall*, *The Alhambra* and Knickerbocker's *History of New York*. In the first we get a series of superb pictures of life in one of the old baronial halls of England. In *The Alhambra* Irving has not only given splendid pen pictures of the finest remains of the Moorish conquest of Spain, but he has told many legends and stories that are full of charm. The *History of New York* is the best piece of sustained humor that has yet been produced in this country. Some descendants of the old Dutch Governors of New Amsterdam have tried to show that Irving has grossly maligned these worthies, but through the air of convincing narration which Irving adopted we may see gleams



SUNNYSIDE,
HOME OF
WASHINGTON IRVING
FROM A DRAWING
BY JULIAN RIX

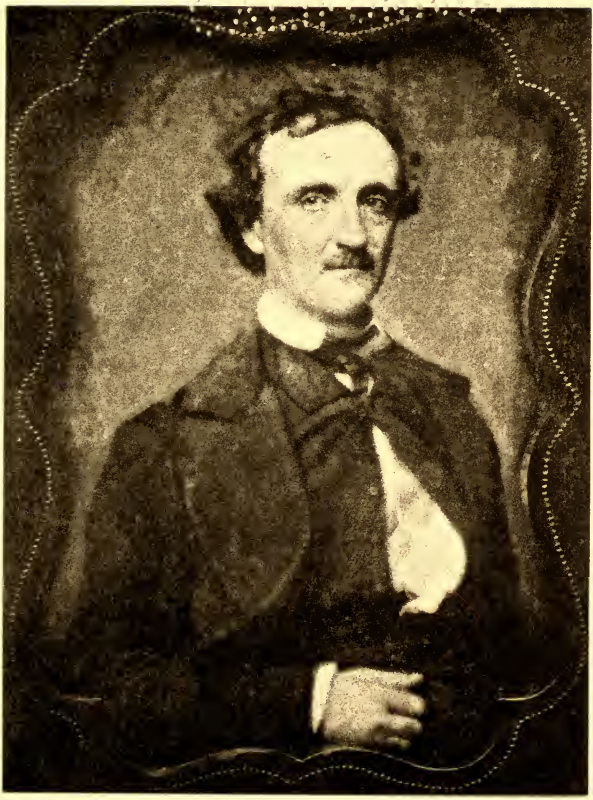
of fun emerging. It is rich in spontaneous humor and free from malice.

It is well for us in these days of business hustle and social activity to read Irving, for he acts on the mind like a sedative. His style exhales the aroma of a fine old leisure that has become one of the lost American arts. He is always unhurried, always master of his materials, ever charming, never dull or prosy. In a word, his best works are the most agreeable companions, which entertain while they instruct, and which never leave upon the mental palate any of the evil taste of the more highly seasoned literature of our day. Blessed is the reader who can relish Irving, for he will always have an unfailing resource in time of trouble or depression.

Art of Edgar Allen Poe

Work of the Finest Short-Story Writer in America — His Poems and Tales Translated into Many Languages.

The ordinary rules in classifying writers do not apply to Edgar Allan Poe. Of all American writers he has probably the widest international fame. Far more French than American in his genius, he was closer akin to Alfred de Musset or Guy de Maupassant than any English short-story writer. His was that precision in style and that dramatic force in plot which lends itself readily to translation into French. In an age when the writer was fond of asserting his presence, Poe preserved an attitude of aloofness that rivals that of Maupassant or Turgenieff. All his genius is devoted to producing



Edgar Allan Poe
From a Daguerreotype made at Richmond
by Pratt

certain dramatic effects and in this he succeeds by the use of words and pictures which fairly hypnotize the reader. It never occurs to one to criticize any of Poe's short stories or poems while reading it. In fact, once under the spell of this spiritual necromancer, the reader becomes a captive and is borne swiftly to the climax of tale or poem.

Poe had the greatest genius for literary form of any American writer. In his poems, as well as in his short stories, he labored so carefully to perfect his style, to secure the fitting word, that his fame was secure long before his death. In the final accounting of literary genius, say a hundred years after a writer's birth, form is the thing which assures permanent fame. Of course, high literary form presupposes thought or imagination behind it; but the best thought, cast in awkward or slovenly language, is not literature.

Poe is known as the writer of some of the most perfectly conceived and highly finished short stories in the language, as well as the author of a number of poems that are unique because of their melody and their haunting charm. In both departments of American literature he was

a pioneer. He first developed what has come to be known as the detective story, working out all the details with a subtle originality that has never been surpassed. He also was the first to make real and convincing the mystery tale, drawn from science, which Jules Verne later carried to such high success. Poe had enormous patience in gathering scientific data for such work, and his analytic mind took keen satisfaction in deductions which made clear and plain many bewildering mysteries. Poe also developed to the highest degree the cryptogram in such tales as *The Gold Bug*, setting a standard which no disciple has ever surpassed. And yet in all his work there is an absence of the man behind the artist, or, if he reveals himself at all, his personality is not pleasant.

It is the literary artist, not the man, who interests the reader in all Poe's work, whether in prose or in verse. As a poet he had natural command of melodious language, which has been surpassed in our day only by Swinburne, while his conceptions were so strange and unreal that they stamp themselves ineffaceably on the reader's mind. Poe's poetical genius

delighted in pictures of woe; it moved with the greatest freedom when depicting blighted love and ruined lives. It was Byronic in its view of life, but it bore no trace of the hard cynicism of *Don Juan*. Even *The Raven*, which is Poe's masterpiece, does not impress one as cynical. *The Bells* is a superb performance in the melody of words, while many of the shorter poems, notably those scattered through his short stories, are simply studies in words, as purely sensuous in their appeal to the ear as the music of Strauss. No thought can be discovered in these poems; they are merely variations on life and its lost illusions, in which Poe uses words instead of musical notes. Supreme melody atones for lack of thought or any real emotion. As far as genuine human feeling is concerned, Browning's *Pippa Passes* has more of real life in it than all of Poe's poems.

In common with the careers of other men of literary genius, Poe's life was uneventful. He came of a family of actors, but when only two years of age he was left an orphan and was adopted by Mrs. John Allan of Richmond. The family soon afterward went to London, and Edgar was sent to a school at Stoke Newington, near

London, which he described in his story, *William Wilson*. Poe appears to have been a highly imaginative boy, with a keen taste for literature, but with none of the usual boy's pleasure in rough sports. He read widely and gained his intimate knowledge of the Bible from regular attendance at church and other religious functions with his foster mother. Allan, however, had a materialistic bent, and from books in his library Poe's natural inclination in the same direction was probably strengthened. Allan, who was a prosperous merchant, never liked the boy, and when Poe reached the proper age he had the lad sent to the University of Virginia.

As a student Poe excelled in literary studies, but he gambled and drank, and Allan soon refused to pay his debts. Thereupon Poe arranged to work his way to England, where he hoped to make his living by his pen. He was disappointed, but visited Paris and then returned to this country. In these years he constantly practiced writing verse, and in 1827 he issued a first volume of poems through a Boston publisher, entitled *Tamerlane*, but it excited no comment. He enlisted in the army and served two years, but his foster



Edgar Allan Poe's Cottage, Fordham
After a Drawing by Mie Pate

mother, learning of his occupation, induced her husband to secure his discharge. Allan was making arrangements to have Poe enter West Point when his wife died. With her ended all Poe's hopes of any assistance from Allan. Poe was devoted to literary work while preparing to enter the academy and issued another book of youthful verse, *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems.*

By temperament and habit Poe was unsuited to the military life and he spent only one year at West Point. When he came out he devoted himself to newspaper work, writing many of his best tales and poems for the newspaper or magazine with which he happened to be associated. His life from this time until his sudden death in Baltimore was marked by many vicissitudes. Although he worked hard he received such poor pay for his services that he was always in debt. Had he lived in these days he would have commanded a princely revenue from rival magazines, which would have bid against one another for his tales and poems. As it was, he was unable to provide ordinary comforts for the girl wife whom he loved devotedly. His one weakness was a tendency to drink.

One glass of wine or hard cider was sufficient to start him on a debauch that frequently cost him regular employment. It was during one of these drinking periods that he was seized by unscrupulous politicians in Baltimore and taken from one precinct to another to vote for their ticket. Exposure and bad liquor broke down Poe's enfeebled frame and his system could not rally from the shock. Poe's fame was clouded for years by exaggerated stories of his drinking habits. The truth is that he did an enormous amount of the best literary work, and that, considering his imagination and his lack of success, he indulged in drink less than most men of his temperament.

In considering the best things among Poe's many prose tales it is difficult to fix on those stories which are best worth reading, so much depends upon the taste of the reader. The finest thing in the domain of sheer horror is *The Fall of the House of Usher*, perhaps the most finished and consistent of all Poe's prose work. It is a study in premature burial, and in all fiction there is nothing more thrilling than the sounds of the hollow reverberation of the doors of the tomb of the Lady Madeline,

while the narrator is reading the old chronicle of the champion Ethelred, and of the final appearance of the enshrouded figure at the door of the brother's chamber. Next to this I would place *The Cask of Amontillado*, a case of a jealous husband's revenge, which is wrought out to its terrible end without a flaw.

Among mysteries of crime the first place must be given to *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, a tale that is perfect until the interest is abruptly ended by the discovery that the murderer is not a human being. The best tale dealing with a cryptogram is *The Gold Bug*, the most popular of all Poe's work, while stories which were the forerunners of all the Jules Verne type of romances are *A Descent Into the Maelstrom* and *The MS. Found in a Bottle*. Both these are tales of horror dealing with the great maelstrom that was once popularly supposed to be located at the poles, through which the waters of the ocean rushed.

Criticism is powerless before Poe's best poems, as it is before the melodies of the great composers. The evident effort of the poet was to appeal so thoroughly to the ear that the mind would be satisfied with the sheer melody. This is the case

with *The Raven*, *The Bells*, *To One in Paradise*, *Annabel Lee* and *Ulalume*. They are simply variations in melody, executed by one of the great masters of the music of words. Poe wrought at these and other poems all his life, changing a word here or a bit of punctuation there, and all his changes were in the line of greater melody. Language under his hand became plastic, and he worked miracles in rhythm and rhyme.

It is difficult to make any extract from Poe's poems without injuring the context, but one may get an idea of the melody of his verse from this stanza from *AnnabelLee:*

> For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
> Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
> And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes
> Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
> And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
> Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride,
> In her sepulchre there by the sea —
> In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Hawthorne's Somber Puritan Romances

"The Scarlet Letter," "The House of the Seven Gables" and "Mosses From an Old Manse" — Art in "The Marble Faun."

Two of the foremost American critics, William Dean Howells and Professor William Lyon Phelps, unite in declaring that Hawthorne was the greatest literary artist this country has known, and that his *Scarlet Letter* is the finest novel in American literature. Yet it is safe to say that those who follow eagerly the best sellers of Chambers and McCutcheon have never read any of Hawthorne's exquisite tales of Puritan New England.

Of all American authors, Hawthorne has been my favorite for many years, since as a boy of sixteen I discovered his *Mosses From an Old Manse*, and read again and

again those tales of Puritan New England until something of their beauty and their elusive charm passed into my mind. In my estimation no other author who has used the English language possesses a style that will compare with Hawthorne's, or has any other his power of investing ordinary life with the mingled terror and charm of the supernatural. In sheer force of imagination he surpasses all his contemporaries, and when one compares his tales of witchcraft with the work of Hoffman and other German apostles of mysticism, his stories make theirs appear thin and amateurish.

Endowed with one of the vivid creative minds, Hawthorne's rare gifts have failed to impress many critics, who, like Henry James, in that unhappy sketch in which he revealed his own limitations, bewailed the fact that the author of *The Scarlet Letter* had no real historical background for his tales. Fine literary artificer as he is, I would give all of Henry James' work for one of Hawthorne's tales like *Roger Malvin's Burial* or *Young Goodman Brown*. No one has written any adequate estimate of Hawthorne, because very few critics have any idea of the service to American

literature rendered by this shy man of genius, who at the same time was a pretty hard-headed, sensible man of affairs.

Although his *Scarlet Letter* has been widely read, much of Hawthorne's best work has been neglected because few people appreciate the peculiar charm of his tales and sketches. His imagination is so fine, his humor so quiet, his cast of mind so unusual that unless one has a strong taste for solitude and for the study of the spiritual, it is difficult to get into close touch with Hawthorne and to feel the singular power and lawlessness of his genius. In all literature no one, in my judgment, has approached him in the uncanny power of moving with ease and sureness in that spiritual world that seems to lie so close to reality and yet which the average author cannot make us see clearly.

In this intangible world, Hawthorne seems to move as though he were an actual resident. He passes in a moment from the hard, practical New England life to that borderland of witchcraft which terrified the souls of the superstitious and led to the unspeakable horrors of the Salem trials — that hysteria of morbid minds which was as cruel and vile as the cold

savagery of the French women who knitted in the shadow of the Paris guillotine and waited every day for the thrill that tingled through their overwrought nerves when one more head dropped into the bloody basket. The historian's account of the Salem witchcraft trials is poor and colorless compared with Hawthorne's awful picture of the young New England man who stepped from his warm fireside into the devilish riot of the foul-minded witches who cackled obscene jests and blasphemed all holy things from pure lust of wickedness.

Hawthorne's work cannot be appreciated without some knowledge of his curious early life and its strange environment that forced a shy, scholarly boy into the habits of a recluse. The novelist inherited his stalwart frame and his wholesome common sense from his seafaring ancestors; his glorious imagination and all his morbid traits came straight from his mother. When the boy was four years old he lost his father, while his mother, smarting under the loss of her husband, became a bitter recluse.

Upon sound and wholesome children the influence of a mother who never took her meals with her children, and who some-



Nathaniel Hawthorne
At the Age of Thirty-six
Etched by S. A. Schoff from a Painting made
in 1840 by Charles Osgood

times spent days of solitude in her chamber, could not fail to be evil. How much greater was this influence when Nathaniel, a strangely shy and thoughtful child, was driven to solitude in his turn and to lose himself in the great world of books. His favorite books in those days were *Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Faerie Queene*. From these and the King James Bible he drew that marvelous style which has been the despair of all other writers. When fourteen years old his mother moved from Salem, Massachusetts, where the boy was born, to a little village near Lake Sebago, in the Maine woods, where she owned some land. There the boy led a very unhealthy life, carrying his love of solitude to the dangerous point of never going out upon the road by daylight, lest he should meet people, and frequently skating alone on the somber lake until midnight or after.

Physically in those months Hawthorne became a model of manly strength and beauty, but mentally he received a twist toward the morbid, from which he never recovered. Also he seemed ever after to be curiously detached from real life, to look on the most vital things with the eyes of a mere uninterested observer.

This was probably seen in greatest measure in the early days of the Civil War, when Hawthorne could feel no stirrings of patriotism, but regarded the tremendous struggle for national life and honor as a deplorable mistake, born of political feuds and hatreds. There was something wrong with a man who could, as George William Curtis so well said, "write like a disembodied intelligence of events with which his neighbors' hearts were quivering."

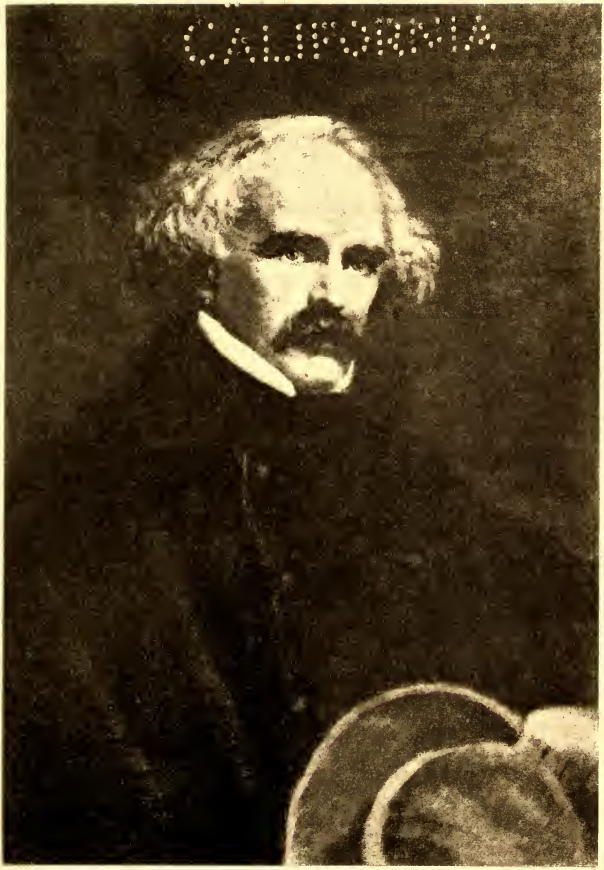
Hawthorne went to Bowdoin College at seventeen, and had as chums Longfellow, Franklin Pierce, afterward President, and Horatio Bridge. He gained no distinction at college, and after graduation returned to Salem, where his mother had established her home. For twenty years in Salem he wrought at literature, writing the stories which were gathered in *Mosses From an Old Manse* and *Twice-Told Tales*. Few knew him, and he said bitterly after years of work that he still remained the least known of any American man of letters. He married Sophia Peabody, a woman of great purity of mind and spiritual fervor. She proved an enormous stimulus and comfort to the lonely, sensitive man, and helped him to find himself.

After serving in the Custom-house at Boston, and later in the Salem Custom-house, Hawthorne made his first literary hit in 1849 with *The Scarlet Letter*, the greatest tragedy of a guilty soul ever written. He followed this with *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Blithedale Romance* and *The Marble Faun*. These sum up his best work, which is in a class by itself, set apart from all other fiction by its sense of spiritual power working out the problems of remorse of soul and the inevitable atonement for sin.

The reader who is taking up Hawthorne for the first time would do well to begin with some of the short stories from *Mosses From an Old Manse*. Perhaps the preface to this book shows Hawthorne's style at its best. Of the tales take *Roger Malvin's Burial*, *The Birthmark* and *Young Goodman Brown*. One gives the somber Puritan idea of the terrible expiation of sin that must be made by everyone in this world. In this tale the desertion of a comrade in the wilderness costs a man the life of his dearly beloved son, and the boy falls by his father's hand in the shadow of a great rock which he identifies as the very place that witnessed his own treachery to his

dying comrade. *The Birthmark* illustrates the foolish passion for perfection that led an artist to sacrifice the woman he loved in order to free her face from a minor blemish. In the third story we have a powerful picture of the evil influence of witchcraft upon the soul of the Puritan. Goodman Brown's one night in the forest is a picture that no reader will ever forget.

Of all Hawthorne's romances, *The Scarlet Letter* is the most finished and satisfactory. It is a full-length study of the spiritual influence of sin upon two highly sensitive natures and the terrible effects of hate upon old Roger Chillingworth. He was the husband of Hester, who fled from him for love of Arthur Dimmesdale, the eloquent young preacher. In New England, where the guilty couple sought a refuge, the woman was condemned to wear the scarlet letter A, a symbol of her shame, on her breast, for she refused to divulge the paternity of her child. No one except the old husband knew that the preacher was her lover and the father of the beautiful girl who is at once her mother's daily torment and comfort. Sad but sweet are the secret meetings of Dimmesdale and Hester, but the little child, Pearl, serves



Nathaniel Hawthorne
This Excellent Likeness is from an Oil Painting by Frances Osborne, Painted in 1893 from Photographs. Owned by the Essex Institute

by her innocent questions to barb the arrows that sting the soul of the two forlorn lovers. The final scene, in which the preacher denounces himself and his sin, is one of the most tremendous in all literature, but the irony of fate makes his devoted hearers believe he has lost his mind, for they cannot associate the breaking of the moral law with the pure-minded ascetic who has served as their model for so many years.

The House of the Seven Gables is the very essence of mellow romance. The illusion of old New England days is perfect, and the figure of Judge Pyncheon, a hard-hearted but sanctimonious old Puritan, a devourer of widows and orphans, whose voice is yet loud in the tabernacle, is the most impressive in the story. All the little detail of Hepzibah's shop is beautifully done, and pretty Phœbe is one of the daintiest maidens in fiction.

Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* is the only romance in which the background is rich in a storied past. Into it he has put all his passion for the things in Rome that appealed to his imagination, but these historic buildings and the magnificent works of art that he describes do not move

him like the homely things of New England that he has preserved in the amber of his incomparable style. In Donatello, the faun, Hawthorne has drawn a figure that, seen in the vivid Roman sunlight, appears to be simply a light-hearted young man, but in a moment, shifted to the shadows of the half-light, he is a wild creature of the woods, and we look for the faun's ears under his curly hair. It is a fine conception, wrought with all the skill of a great artist and with an atmosphere of mingled mystery and expectation that serves to bring every figure into bold relief.

Hawthorne did much good work aside from these novels. His articles on English life, gathered under the title *Our Old Home*, have never been equaled for shrewd insight and descriptive skill. His note-books, edited by his widow, are filled with good things, and on many pages one sees a sentence which has served as the germ of a story. Hawthorne also wrote some of the most delightful letters, and his love letters reveal the tender heart and the quick sympathies of the man who seemed so cold to mere acquaintances. No author, in my opinion, will repay careful study so richly as Hawthorne. You may read him

many times, yet every fresh perusal reveals new beauties. As a study in style his books excel those of any American or English author.

Fenimore Cooper's Original Work

His Tales of the Forest and the Sea — Leatherstocking and Long Tom Coffin Known Around the World.

Fenimore Cooper is better known abroad than any other American writer except Poe. Perhaps this is due in great measure to his magnificent descriptions of wild nature, which appeal strongly to readers who live in an old and well-cultivated country, as well as to his vivid pictures of the North American Indian before the white man's vices debased and ruined him. Cooper's field was his own and it has remained his exclusive possession, for none of his imitators has proved worthy of a place with the master. The only other American writer who has utilized his knowledge of Indian life and

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J. Fenimore Cooper
Engraved from the Painting by C. L. Elliott

character is the historian Parkman, whose sketches of the adventures of Pontiac and other chiefs are as interesting as any work of fiction.

Cooper shares with Irving and Poe the credit of making American literature known to Europe. Washington Irving was the pioneer literary man in this country whose work was recognized as the equal of the work of any European writer. After him came Poe, whose short stories and poems were received with far greater favor in France than in his own country. Cooper probably ranks third, because, despite his remarkable creative ability, he did not possess the faculty for literary style. He wrote carelessly, and much of his best work is disfigured by a prolix style that injures one's appreciation of his stories. Like Scott, whom he resembles in many ways, Cooper was so intent upon his tale that he neglected the manner of telling it. He wrote as he talked, simply, fluently, but with no heed for literary expression, and with none of that careful revision which would have omitted many redundant words and phrases. Cooper always impresses one as a man who never wrote himself out. He always had a large

reserve of knowledge and impressions to draw upon. Breadth of conception, ease in writing and a certain joy in the use of his great creative powers — these are the traits that give much of its vitality to all Cooper's best work. He had no sense of literary artistry as Stevenson had, and perhaps that is one of the reasons why so much more of his work will endure than that of the greatest stylist of the last century.

Cooper is popularly known only by his *Leatherstocking* tales, yet his stories of the sea are as true to nature, as full of fine characters and as crowded with thrilling incidents as any of the romances that center about the enchanted borders of his favorite Otsego lake. Long Tom Coffin, the old man-of-war's man, is as fine a character as Leatherstocking, and the stories that record his adventures are classics that will endure. Cooper had received training at sea and he knew how to handle a ship, so his sea stories show that easy mastery of sails and spars and ropes that makes the reader captive from the outset.

In the same way Cooper's knowledge of woodcraft and of the ways of the Indian and the white hunter and trapper makes one accept as real not only Leatherstock-

ing, but Uncas, Chingachgook, Hardheart, and all the other red men in his immortal romances. Not one of Cooper's imitators, however, equaled him in giving to the novel reader that sense of the mystery and the ever-lurking danger that attended the white hunter in the great woods of this country when the Indian tribes were a constant menace to any stranger. There are chapters in *The Deerslayer* and *The Last of the Mohicans* that move with the breathless interest of Scott at his best in *Ivanhoe* or *Quentin Durward*. And Cooper's genius is the more remarkable from the fact that he had no historical background to lend force and color to his characters. All he had was this great trackless wilderness, which he depicted with such power as to make Balzac declare, "If Cooper had succeeded in the painting of character as well as he did in the painting of the phenomena of nature he would have uttered the last word of our art."

Cooper was far more English in his character and mind than American, but he had no narrow prejudices, for he had traveled widely and seen much of life. His early training in the navy was of great benefit when he came to write of the sea,

and his life for years on the shores of Otsego lake gave him a rare chance to study the primeval wilderness and the Indian as he existed before he was corrupted by the white man's vices. It has become a stock subject for comment among many writers that Cooper idealized the Indian in such types as Uncas, but any careful reader of the *Leatherstocking* tales knows that Cooper's Indians are not only real and genuine, but they are as true to life as Natty Bumpo.

Cooper showed that while his Indians always remembered a favor, they never failed to revenge an injury, although they might wait years for this satisfaction of an old grudge. They are never "good" Indians in the sense of being converts to Christianity or of thinking or acting like white men. After years of association with the whites they remain as primitive savages as the true Chinese today remains a consistent pagan after a lifetime in the service of an American family. The blood lust is easily aroused in Cooper's Indians, and it is never sated without the scalp of an enemy.

Cooper came of the best English Quaker stock, mixed on his mother's side with a



One of the Vignette Engravings Reproducing
the Illustrations by F. O. C. Darley,
which Adorned the Early Editions
of Cooper's Works

Swedish strain, also Quaker. Though born in New Jersey, he was taken when a baby to his father's estate near Otsego lake, in Central New York, where the city of Cooperstown had been laid out. There he spent his boyhood in a wild country over which Indian bands still roamed, and he saw much of Indian life, which profoundly colored his imagination. At fourteen he entered Yale, but he was expelled in his junior year because of neglect of his studies. Desiring to enter naval life, he was forced, because of the lack of a naval academy, to spend sixteen months in the merchant service before he received a midshipman's commission. After three years of varied experience he resigned and took up farming in Westchester county on the estate of his wife. There he began authorship by writing a novel, to see whether he could not tell a better story than one which he had been reading to his wife. His first attempt was a failure, as he dealt with English aristocratic life, but his second story, *The Spy*, proved to be one of the best of the romances of the Revolutionary War. Its success gave Cooper confidence, and he turned to his recollections of Indian life and produced

The Pioneers, one of the Leatherstocking tales. He showed his versatility by writing in the following year *The Pilot*, one of the finest of his sea stories. From this time, 1824, until 1850, the year before he died, Cooper averaged more than one novel every year.

In reading Cooper it is well to begin with *The Deerslayer* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, and to follow the course of Hawkeye from his splendid youth in the first of these tales down through *The Pathfinder*, to his vigorous old age in *The Pioneers* and *The Prairie*. No other books in any language give one so fine a panorama of savage life as these *Leatherstocking* tales. Through them move the supple and treacherous Indians, masters of woodcraft and of all the methods of savage warfare that is as picturesque as the fighting of the Greeks in Homer's great epic, and the small band of white hunters and trappers led by Leatherstocking himself, whose bravery, simplicity and mastery of Indian lore were reproduced in our own day in Kit Carson and "Buffalo Bill" Cody.

These stories are full of thrilling incident, of pursuit by the relentless Indians, of narrow escapes from death by torture

at the stake, of splendid shooting with the old long squirrel rifle that proved so deadly at New Orleans to Pakenham's veterans, and of many superb descriptions of the great forest that clothed upper New York State and the whole country that fringes the Great Lakes from the head of the St. Lawrence river to the western border of Lake Superior. It is difficult to conceive of this now densely populated country as once covered by unbroken forest, but thirty years ago men were living in Western New York who remembered as boys the cutting of roads through the dense timber in that State to allow their wagons to pass on the way to the Northern Reserve of Ohio.

Cooper knew the Adirondack region and its lower fringe that included Otsego lake. the Glimmerglass of *Leatherstocking*, as a man knows his own hand. Every foot of it he had tramped over; he had camped by its beautiful mountain lakes and fished in its ice-cold streams. And the joy of this free, savage life had entered into his blood so that he could picture it in his stories with a passionate ardor that warms the heart of the reader. In these days of the Boy Scout movement and the revival

of interest in life in the open air, Cooper's *Leatherstocking* stories should come in for careful reading. Any healthy boy or girl will bless you for making known these tales of Cooper's, that tell of the golden age of adventure in the pathless woods, when physical strength, courage, coolness, endurance and skill with the old muzzle-loading rifle were pitted against Indian craft and the instinct for following the trail and divining the movements of an enemy at a great distance. The younger generation can never hope to see again the forest primeval, but the next thing to seeing it with one's own eyes is to see it in Cooper's word pictures, as it was before the ax of the lumberman laid it in ruins.

Of Cooper's sea stories, the best is *The Pilot*, which tells in graphic style of the exploits of John Paul Jones in English waters. It introduces Long Tom Coffin, Cooper's other great creation, as original as Leatherstocking, a Yankee sailor who showed the same qualities at sea that the hunter revealed in the forest. This tale demonstrated Cooper's command of the lore of the sea, which he afterward proved in such fine sea stories as *Wing and Wing* and *Afloat and Ashore*.

Cooper was intensely unpopular during his best years because he had the courage to criticise many unlovely traits of his countrymen. The Americans whose manners Dickens and Mrs. Trollope satirized had a wonderfully thin skin, and Cooper had an unfortunate genius for irritating his home public. He was lampooned in the newspapers, and he promptly brought libel suits, argued the cases himself, and invariably recovered damages. Not satisfied with this, he exploited his opinions on many subjects in his novels, with the result that his great abilities were not recognized until after his death.

The controversies which embittered Cooper's last years seem almost childish to us now. Nothing remains but the real work done by Cooper, who has added one supremely fine character to the world's gallery of great personages in fiction. It is to his credit also that he did such good work when he was pestered by malignant detractors. To have created Leatherstocking is a passport to enduring fame; yet Cooper added to this typical American backwoodsman Long Tom Coffin, the shrewd Yankee sailor, and a long line of other original characters.

Longfellow
The Poet of the Household

More Popular Abroad Than Any Other American Writer of Verse — His Strong Sense of Nationality.

Longfellow cannot be classed among the world's greatest poets — with Shakespeare, Browning, Tennyson, or Victor Hugo — but he is probably more widely read than any of these poets of the first rank. Thomas Wentworth Higginson quotes from Professor Grovesnor of Amherst College an anecdote which shows the worldwide popularity of the author of *Evangeline* and *Hiawatha*. The professor was one of a party traveling from Constantinople to Marseilles when the talk at table turned upon poetry, and no less than six persons of six different nationalities repeated poems of Longfellow and declared that he was their favorite poet. The

Russian lady who started the discussion, aptly ended it with this wise remark: "Do you suppose there is any other poet of any country, living or dead, from whom so many of us could have quoted? Not one. Not even Shakespeare, or Victor Hugo, or Homer."

Higginson follows this with figures from the British Museum catalogue of 1901, which gives under each author's name the record of every memoir, criticism, parody or translation of his works. In this test Longfellow stands first among American poets with 357 titles and the others follow in this order: Emerson (158), Holmes (135), Lowell (114), Whittier (104), Poe (103) and Whitman (64). Again in the first balloting by the hundred judges for candidates for the new Hall of Fame in the New York University, only 39 names secured a majority of these, and Longfellow was tenth in rank, the only American man of letters who exceeded him in votes being Emerson. These are all definite proofs of Longfellow's worldwide popularity.

Since Poe, in jealous rage over the superior popularity of Longfellow's work, lampooned his poems and derided his

poetic ability, many critics have had their fling at the New England bard. It has been said that he had no genuine poetic inspiration; that many of his most popular poems are purely ethical and have no claim to rank as true poetry; that he was an imitator of many foreign poets and at best simply a wonderfully skilful adapter of other men's thoughts. Yet, in spite of all these attacks, which Longfellow never deigned to notice, his poems continued to be translated into foreign languages, while edition after edition was demanded in English-speaking countries. An editor of one of the great London weekly papers said not many years ago: "A stranger can hardly have an idea how familiar many of our working people, especially women, are with Longfellow. Thousands can repeat some of his poems who have never read a line of Tennyson and probably never heard of Browning." And the visitor to Westminster Abbey is impressed by the fact that in Poet's Corner, on a bracket near the tomb of Chaucer and between the memorials to Cowley and Dryden, stands a fine marble bust of Longfellow, the gift of English and American admirers. Lowell, then our minister to



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
In 1859
From a Photograph by Brady

England, was the chief speaker at the unveiling of this bust and in eloquent words, paid his tribute to Longfellow, the poet and the man.

Longfellow came of good old Yorkshire stock and he could trace his descent to four of the Mayflower pilgrims. He was born in Portland, Maine, in 1807, and he learned his letters at the early age of three. At thirteen, while a student in the Portland Academy, he composed his first poem, *Venice, an Italian Song*, and a little later his first verses appeared in print in the local newspaper. The youthful poet chose an American theme, *The Battle of Lowell's Pond*, and the verse would do credit to a maturer hand. Longfellow went to Bowdoin College, where he had Hawthorne for a classmate. There, while he did not excel in studies, he was an omnivorous reader and he showed keen interest in poetry and in books about the American Indian. One of his college exercises was a plea for the Indians, while his commencement oration was on *Our Native Writers*. Some critics have seen in this youthful appeal for the Red Man the germ of *Hiawatha*. During his college course Longfellow contributed a number

of poems to the United States Literary Gazette, a new semi-monthly literary periodical, and after graduation many of his poems will be found in the Gazette with the early verses of Bryant.

It is seldom that a young man enters college with a definite plan for life, but Longfellow had decided at this early age that he would choose a literary career. Law, medicine, theology did not appeal to him; but his father would not listen to his literary plans. Instead he insisted upon his studying law in his own office. There the youth of nineteen was offered the new position of professor of modern languages in Bowdoin College, with the privilege of a year's study in Europe. He gladly accepted it, but his stay abroad was prolonged to three years. One year he devoted to France, Spain and Italy; the remainder to study in Germany. He entered upon his duties at Bowdoin College when only twenty-two years of age. The results of Longfellow's European studies may be found in *Outre-Mer*, a series of prose sketches of his travels written in the style of Washington Irving. It is a remarkable fact that all his early work was in prose, *Outre-Mer* being followed by

Hyperion, a rhetorical romance of a young lover's visit to Europe. This second prose work seemed to stimulate his long dormant poetical faculty and he wrote the poems which appeared in his first book of verse, *Voices of the Night.*

Longfellow at this time was established as Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard College. He made his home in the historic Craigie House at Cambridge, where he lived for the remainder of his life. After eighteen years of service as professor he retired and devoted himself entirely to literature. His home life was ideal but marked by two tragedies. His first wife died suddenly during his second visit to Europe, while his second wife was fatally burned at her own fireside. Longfellow kept open house for years at Cambridge, entertaining everyone of note who visited the city. Howells in his *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* gives a very attractive picture of Longfellow's life in his later years at Cambridge — an old age full of "honor, love, obedience, troops of friends." On his last visit to Europe he was given the Doctor's degree by Cambridge and Oxford and all London paid him high honors.

Anyone who takes up Longfellow's poems is sure to be impressed by the number of striking lines that he has contributed to our literature. He seemed to have the faculty of putting a fine thought into quotable form, and his early verses yield a richer harvest of these things than his later and maturer poems. In reading *Voices of the Night*, his first volume of verse, one comes upon a remarkable collection of lines which have passed into the body of current American speech. John Bartlett in his *Familiar Quotations* gives eight pages to selections from Emerson and eleven pages to extracts from Longfellow. Into his early poems, written with the enthusiasm of young manhood, he put so much of spiritual force that they are stamped upon the reader's memory. Here, for instance, is *A Psalm of Life*, with its splendid optimism cast in lines that have become household words, and here *The Reaper and the Flowers* or a *Psalm of Death*. Then follow the ballads, *The Skeleton in Armor*, with its superb vision of a Norse Viking's storm life, and the pathos of *The Wreck of the Hesperus*. Here also are *The Village Blacksmith*, *Excelsior* and *Maidenhood*. Four years later appeared



Henry Wadsworth
Longfellow
In His Study
From a Photograph
taken in 1876

a group of poems of which *The Belfry of Bruges*, *The Arsenal at Springfield* and *The Old Clock on the Stairs* were the most noteworthy. The Springfield Arsenal Longfellow inspected in company with Charles Sumner, and the poem that resulted from this visit is an eloquent plea for peace. These verses, which sum up the poet's creed, have special force at this time when more than half the civilized world is engaged in the most destructive war ever known:

Were half the power, that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts:

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred!
And every nation, that should lift again
Its head against a brother, on its forehead
Would wear forevermore the curse of Cain!

Of all Longfellow's shorter poems the one which has probably had the widest appeal is that entitled *Resignation*, written after the death of his little daughter Fanny. In no other poem with which I am familiar is found the same pathos over the loss of a dear one, the same assurance of meeting in a better world the child who has gone before. Though almost as familiar as the best Psalms, two verses are

quoted here to show the simplicity of Longfellow's methods:

There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!

* * *

There is no Death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian
Whose portal we call Death.

Three of Longfellow's longer poems are worth notice, not only because of their many beauties of thought and form but because they are distinctively American. These are *Evangeline*, *Hiawatha* and *The Courtship of Miles Standish.* The pathetic romance of the Acadian lovers, which Longfellow immortalized in hexameters in *Evangeline*, was suggested by a story told by a Catholic priest to Hawthorne and by him repeated to Longfellow, who begged permission to make a poem of it. It is the most perfect thing that Longfellow ever wrote. *The Song of Hiawatha*, perhaps, has had a greater vogue, as it pictures the life, the customs and the religious rites of the American Indian. The poet drew his materials from legends of the Ojibway tribe and he cast it in the form of the Kavalera, which gave great freedom of

expression and free play of alliteration. *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, also told in hexameters, is full of fine pictures of Colonial life.

It is one of the ironies of the literary life that the poem on which Longfellow spent the most effort and regarded as his best made little impression on the great world of readers. This was *Christus*, a series of eloquent pictures of the life of the Savior. Another work on which Longfellow lavished much pains was a metrical translation of Dante which shared the fate of *Christus*.

Longfellow was a master of many forms of the poetical art, but he was especially skilful in handling the sonnet. Especially fine are the six sonnets on *The Divine Comedy of Dante* and the sonnet on *The Cross of Snow* — a tribute to his wife, who met the cruelest of deaths by her own fireside.

Perhaps the best summing up of Longfellow's influence is found in these lines by Thomas Wentworth Higginson: "He will never be read for the profoundest stirring, or for the unlocking of the deepest mysteries; he will always be read for invigoration, for comfort, for content."

Lowell As Poet, Essayist and Critic

His "Commemoration Ode," "The Biglow Papers" and His Literary Essays His Best Work.

James Russell Lowell's place as poet, essayist and critic is not clearly defined. He came very near greatness as both poet and essayist, but he missed, a place in the first rank, largely through a certain frostiness of temperament. As a critic he has been assailed recently by Dr. Joseph J. Reilly, formerly of the College of the City of New York, who declares that he has no claim to the name of a scientific literary critic of the class of Sainte-Beuve or Matthew Arnold; but over against this must be placed the dictum of William Dean Howells, who says of Lowell: "In his lectures on the English poets he has proved himself easily the



James Russell Lowell
In 1857
From a Crayon Drawing by S. W. Rowse

wisest and finest critic in our language." Certainly in the quality of literary stimulus Lowell's essays must be given a foremost place. Even about Shakespeare he has something novel and illuminating to say, and upon the lesser writers of the Elizabethan era he pours a flood of light. He makes all these old worthies very real and human, as though they were of our own time. Lowell was hurt also by the fact that he was what Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes called a New England Brahmin. He was a natural aristocrat, who believed that a long and well-defined strain of good blood was necessary for a man to accomplish much in this world. It was this strong strain of the aristocrat in him, joined to his great ability as an after-dinner speaker, that made Lowell so popular in England when he was American Minister to St. James. Another trait of Lowell's that has repelled many readers is the strong school-masterish tendency that leads him to lecture his readers frequently and to go into tedious detail on many subjects.

But with all these drawbacks Lowell has fairly held his own, and he probably has more readers today than when he was

before the public as our Minister to England. His poetry fills five good-sized volumes, but all that will live may be squeezed into less than one volume. His greatest poem is the magnificent *Commemoration Ode*, written to celebrate the dedication of the noble Memorial Hall at Harvard, erected in memory of those of the New England university's sons who fell in the Civil War. It sounds the heights and the depths of American patriotism, and it contains in a few lines the finest portrait of Lincoln that has ever been drawn. The poems also include *The Biglow Papers*, which are supreme as the best version of the Yankee dialect in our literature, as well as some of the keenest satire on the pretensions of the Southern pro-slavery party that brought on the Mexican War.

Lowell as a poet seldom gave the public an imperfect line. He was a master of his craft. His wide study and reading and his command of many tongues made the technical part of the poet's work as easy for him as it was for Byron or Swinburne. Melodious is the term which best applies to all his verse, but he had something more than melody and sweetness. He had the

faculty, which Emerson lacked, of making the reader see and feel the charm of the New England seasons and the beauty of the common flowers of the garden and the field.

To Lowell all nature appealed with new force and beauty every morning, as though he were born again each day, with unjaded senses, eager to savor the perfume of the flowers, keen to note the beauty of clouds and trees, of green sloping meadows and of lakes flashing in the clear sunlight. When he touches on nature you feel the poet let himself go; he warms your soul with his passionate love of the woods, the fields and the sea.

Into his essays Lowell poured out the wealth of his learning, while at the same time he indulged his strong taste for many intellectual and critical hobbies. He prefaced a new edition of *The Biglow Papers* with a hundred-page dissertation on the New England dialect, which he proved by hundreds of examples was derived straight from the English of Cromwell's time. Scores of words which are now obsolete in England are preserved in the quaint dialect, the curious clipped speech of Hosea Biglow, Birdofredum Sawin and other

characters in these famous satires in verse. Lowell shows keen enjoyment in dredging up these old, forgotten words and proving that they are far more expressive than the more decorous terms that have taken their place in the common speech.

In such essays as those on Dante, Chaucer and Shakespeare, Lowell reveals a range of reading and a niceness of critical art that can be found in the work of no other American essayist. Hazlitt and Froude at their best do not surpass him here on his chosen ground. And one is struck on nearly every page by some homely simile or metaphor, some home-spun example, that shows how well anchored Lowell was to "the stern and rock-bound coast" that colored his genius while it chilled his temperament.

Lowell differs from nearly every other American writer in his training and his life. Born of a family of Congregational preachers, he showed no fondness for religion, but early developed a strong love for poetry and general literature. Everything was made easy for him by ample means when a youth, and he lived his whole life at Elmwood, the stately home in Cambridge, where he was born. Save for tem-

porary financial straits in his early manhood, he always had a modest competence and he was able to select the work which he loved. Like Emerson, he entered Harvard at the early age of fifteen years, but gained no distinction in scholarship. He studied law, but soon gave this up and devoted himself to poetry.

Through his marriage he came into close contact with the anti-slavery leaders, and this association fired his genius. In *The Biglow Papers*, written to voice the sentiment of New England on the unjust Mexican War, which was carried out in the interest of the Southern slaveholders, he first put the Yankee dialect into literature. The racy humor of these sketches in prose and verse met a warm response at home and abroad, and they first made Lowell known to his countrymen. This period also witnessed the writing of many anti-slavery poems, among which the most notable are those on *Garrison*, *Freedom*, *The Parting of the Ways* and *The Washers of the Shroud*.

At the age of thirty-six Lowell, who had made a reputation as a critic by a series of lectures on the English poets before the Lowell Institute, accepted the chair of

French and Spanish literature at Harvard, which had been occupied by Ticknor and Longfellow before him. He held this professorship for seventeen years, during which he did a large anount of work in verse and prose. In 1872 he resigned his chair at Harvard and devoted himself to literary work. He made frequent trips to Europe, and he acquired in this way an intimate knowledge of France, Spain and Italy.

Public honors came to him in 1877, when he was appointed Minister to Spain, and three years later, when he was made United States Minister to England. Lowell was the most popular American Minister to the court of St. James, his ability as an after-dinner speaker contributing largely to his success. He served five years before he was relieved by President Cleveland. Five years later he died at his old Elmwood home, full of years and honors.

Of Lowell's poems the *Commemoration Ode* is his best work. It is unmatched in American literature for its lofty patriotism. Here Lowell's genius seemed to move without hindrance; it reached the climax of eloquence in the famous portrait of Lincoln, of which these are noteworthy lines:



Elmwood
The Home of
James Russell
Lowell
at Cambridge

Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.
* * *
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, forseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

And here is the climax of his splendid apostrophe to his country:

O Beautiful! My Country! Ours once more,
Smoothing thy gold of war-disheveled hair
O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,
And letting thy set lips,
Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare.
* * *
What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reck not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee,
But ask whatever else, and we will dare!

Other fine poems are *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, with its impressive lesson in genuine Christianity; *The Washers of the Shroud*, one of the best of the poems produced by the sweat and agony of the Civil War, and the pathetic little poems on the death of his daughter and of his wife. *After the Burial* is one of the finest bits of verse in the language. Of course, *The Biglow Papers* are full of good things, as

well as *A Fable for Critics*, a series of brilliant pen pictures of American authors, and *Under the Willows*, a rhapsody on June in New England.

Lowell's best prose work may be found in *My Study Windows* and the three volumes of *Among My Books*. Above everything else, Lowell was the scholar, and his essays reveal this quality in excess. He had the nicest sense of language, and especially in discussing the old English worthies like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton and Dryden, this faculty was allowed free range. The essays on these English poets are well worth reading, as Lowell brings to bear on his subject a mass of material, gathered from wide reading and critical study. His style is very brilliant, but at the same time it often seems almost colloquial, so easy was it for this master of expression to develop his thought.

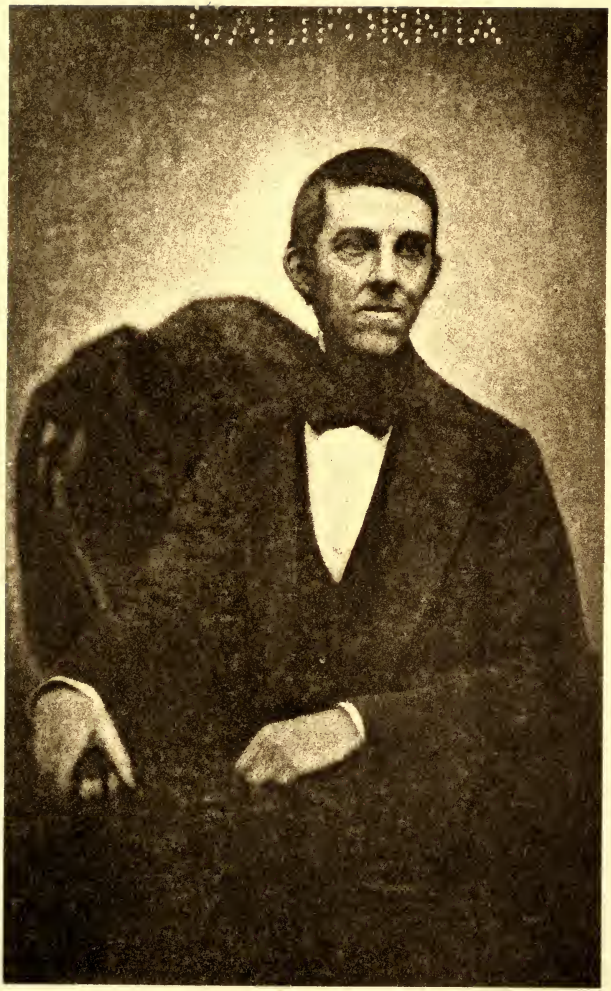
Wit and humor play over all his work and make it a delight to read. The drollest conceits occur to him, and he gives them free play; his fancy invents many novel ideas, and he takes the keenest delight even in making puns. Among American critics no one has ever equaled Lowell in his capacity for making even a heavy sub-

ject as interesting as a novel. And behind all this sparkle of wit was the man who was greater as a talker than a writer. Scores of famous men have borne witness to Lowell's rare charm in conversation — a charm that made men like Carlyle and Thackeray and Froude remain silent when he held forth at table. Lowell wrote much which the world may well forget, but his best verse and his best prose are worth a place even on a five-foot shelf of the world's great books.

Wit and Humor of Oliver Wendell Holmes

Wise and Tender Passages in "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" — Some of His Most Popular Poems.

Oliver Wendell Holmes was an American Admirable Crichton. He was a man who could do a half-dozen things as well as a specialist in each. As a poet he will be remembered longest by *The One-Hoss Shay*, *The Last Leaf* and *Old Ironsides;* as an essayist he gained immortality by *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table;* as a novelist he produced that wonderful study in heredity, *Elsie Venner;* as a writer of occasional verses he was acknowledged to be without an equal; as a physician he took high rank, and many of his medical papers have become classics; as a literary critic he was both feared and admired, as he had the faculty of almost uncanny



Oliver Wendell Holmes
In 1856
At the Age of Forty-seven

insight and an incisive style that pierced all pretense; as an after-dinner speaker he was without a superior in his day. He is lighter in his touch than Lamb, but his pathos is as true as Elia's or Tom Hood's.

What impresses the reader in all Holmes' work is the abounding vitality of the man, the quickness of his fancy, the readiness of his wit and the felicity with which he always chooses the right word, whether in verse or in prose.

Although of purest New England strain, Holmes had few of the genuine Yankee traits. In an age which was marked by religious intolerance, he early showed the greatest liberality in thought. Among men who were noted for their Puritan gravity, he saw the amusing side of every question, and knew how to extract all the fun that was in it. Among a prosaic race, he revealed a sensitive instinct for poetical form that makes his verse a delight to read. When other writers were given to expounding their views in the orthodox way, Holmes devised the art of getting into close touch with his readers by means of his colloquial gifts. Much of the charm of the *Autocrat* lies in his familiar talks with the reader, his letting down the bars of

reserve so that you see the kindly nature of the man, even when you hear the sharp words with which he castigates folly or vice. In this lies the great charm of Holmes, whose books can never become old-fashioned or tiresome. It seems easy, this colloquialism bristling with epigram, repartee and quaint conceit, but try to imitate it, and you will soon see how difficult it is.

Many have been the writers who have followed Holmes in this attractive path which he first blazed in the *Autocrat*, but not one has equaled the master. And although more than fifty years have passed since these delightful essays first saw the light in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY, they are as fresh, as true and as stimulating as when they were written. Considering the remarkable advance in all the physical sciences, upon which Holmes drew largely for his apt illustrations, his skill in striking the modern note is simply miraculous. While much of the work of his contemporaries has been rendered obsolete, his remains as full of piquancy and truth as it was a half-century ago.

Dr. Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1809, and he lived until

1894, reaching the great age of eighty-five years, with most of his senses unimpaired. Even to the last he impressed every-one by the youthfulness and buoyancy of his spirits and his keen interest in all the concerns of life. His father was a preacher, but Holmes very early learned to look upon life with the eyes of a philosopher. He showed at preparatory school a pretty skill in the translation of Virgil into English verse, and at college he delivered a metrical essay before Phi Beta Kappa at his commencement.

At the age of twenty-four he went to Europe to continue his medical studies, and spent three years in London and Paris. This experience was invaluable in enlarging his point of view. He devoted his leisure to writing verse, and in 1836 he published his first volume of poems, which included *Old Ironsides*, that noble plea to save the frigate Constitution, which still has power to stir the blood of any patriotic American. Holmes was active in his profession for eleven years, when he accepted the Harvard chair of anatomy, which he held for thirty-five years, when he was retired as emeritus professor, a position which he held until his death. He was regarded as

one of the best medical authorities in this country, while at the same time he came to be known as the wittiest after-dinner speaker in Boston and one of the cleverest writers of verses of occasion.

It was in 1858, when the ATLANTIC MONTHLY was founded, that Holmes first showed his rare ability as an essayist. He contributed to the first number the initial paper of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, a series of talks on all kinds of subjects, strung on a thread of amusing fiction. The sage who delivers these monologues is the central figure at a typical boarding-house table, and the other characters, like the young fellow John, the poetess, the landlady and her boy, Ben Franklin, all serve to add reality and point to the amusing talks.

It is difficult to indicate the charm of this work, which may be read with relish again and again, so full is it of real human nature, so saturated with that philosophy which believes that this world is a good place and that even the wicked and the ill-natured have more good than evil in their natures. The genial optimism of Holmes has nothing weak or sentimental in it. You feel in reading the Autocrat's



THE HOME OF
OLIVER WENDELL
HOLMES
IN CAMBRIDGE
BUILT IN 1730

CALIFORNIA

sharp speeches that here is a man who has a very firm grip on the realities of life, who has seen the seamy side of life in the great cities of the world, but who has kept his nature sweet and hopeful because his mind is healthy and his spirit is open to all good influences.

The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table is Holmes' masterpiece. It is assured of immortality so long as the English language endures, for it will be just as good reading fifty years hence as it is today. It has a few earmarks of the period when it was written, such as the tendency to italicize striking sentences and to introduce bits of Latin quotations. But these are the only ones. It is packed full of intellectual meat, and a very pretty vein of humor serves to make the old Autocrat's preaching free from all tedium.

It will surprise anyone who looks through it to find how many ideas that have become commonplace now were first offered here by Dr. Holmes for public consideration. A strong medical streak runs through all the monologues, and many of the metaphors and similes are also drawn from the domain of natural science; but the charm of the book lies in the sunny philosophy of

the old scholar, who has seen life at its best and at its worst, and who still finds it good to be alive and to feel the sap of youth in his veins although the years may have touched his head with frost. Here are bits of the Autocrat's wisdom, which may be taken as fair specimens of his talk:

Your self-made man, whittled into shape with his own jack-knife, deserves more credit than the regular engine-turned article, shaped by the most approved pattern, and French polished by society and travel. But as to saying that one is every way the equal of the other, that is another matter.

* * *

Don't flatter yourselves that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into a relation with a person the more necessary do tact and courtesy become. Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friend to learn unpleasant truths from his enemies: they are ready enough to tell them.

* * *

Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The Angel of Life winds them up once for all, then closes the case, and gives the key into the hand of the Angel of the Resurrection.

Tic-tac! tic-tac! go the wheels of thought; our will cannot stop them; they cannot stop themselves; sleep cannot stop them; madness only makes them go faster; death alone can break the case, and, seizing the ever-swinging pendulum, which we call the heart, silence at last the clicking of the terrible escarpment we have carried so long beneath our wrinkled foreheads.

Holmes enlivens the "Autocrat" with many poems, which vary greatly in merit, but as they include *The Wonderful One-Hoss Shay*, *The Chambered Nautilus* and *The Living Temple*, the average is lifted pretty high. The last two serve to illus-

trate very well Holmes' great gift of transmuting scientific truths into the finest poetry.

The Professor at the Breakfast Table appeared a year after the *Autocrat*. It was marked by a delightful love story, and the characters were more sharply drawn. Fourteen years later appeared *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, a work which showed greater maturity than either of the others, but lacked their spontaneity and charm.

In *Elsie Venner* Holmes wrought out a story of the influence of prenatal impressions which would have attracted Hawthorne. He made of it a remarkable study, despite certain chapters that remind one that the author was a doctor.

Of Holmes' poems the two that have had the widest circulation are *Old Ironsides* and *The Last Leaf*, each perfect of its kind. The first was written to arouse public sentiment against the threatened destruction of the old frigate Constitution. The other was suggested to Holmes by Major Thomas Melville, the last of the old generation in Boston that clung to the cocked hat and the wig of the eighteenth century.

Holmes' poems fill a large octavo volume of 350 pages. They were mainly verses

written for special occasions, but the poet put so much of real feeling into them that they are worthy of preservation. Take it all in all, Holmes fills a niche in American literature which is his by virtue of his originality and his pervading charm.

Whittier
The Puritan
Singer

The Anti-Slavery Bard Whose "Snow-Bound," "Tent on the Beach" and Other Poems are Full of Spiritual Fire.

Whittier is a poet who appeals far more to Americans than to Europeans because he appealed with special force to all of New England strain. His life was a complete contradiction to his natural traits. Born a Quaker, with a strong bias in favor of peace, he was thrown from early youth into the fierce turmoil of the anti-slavery agitation, and he contributed many poems that served to hearten the small faction in New England that labored for the freedom of the slave. Seldom traveling more than a few miles from his birthplace in Massachusetts and never visiting Europe, he yet rivals Longfellow

in his references to foreign scenes and historical events. Whittier had fewer advantages and less regular education than any other American writer of prominence; he was also handicapped from early youth by ailments that would have converted a man of less will power into a chronic, peevish invalid. That he educated himself and that he did work in verse which has given him a foremost place among American poets was as great an achievement as was the literary work of Robert Louis Stevenson, accomplished often while he was ill in bed and suffering acute pain. This triumph of the mind and the spirit over weakness of the flesh gave power to much of Whittier's work; it touched his words with flame; it fused into the white heat of passion many of his battle hymns during the long anti-slavery struggle that preceded the Civil War.

Many have forgotten the important part which Whittier played in arousing popular sentiment throughout the Northern states in favor of the rights of the slaves in the South. But it is easy to see what he accomplished when one reads the poems on the wrongs of the slave which he poured forth. One short poem alone roused all



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER
IN HIS AMESBURY GARDEN AT THE AGE OF
SEVENTY-NINE
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1886

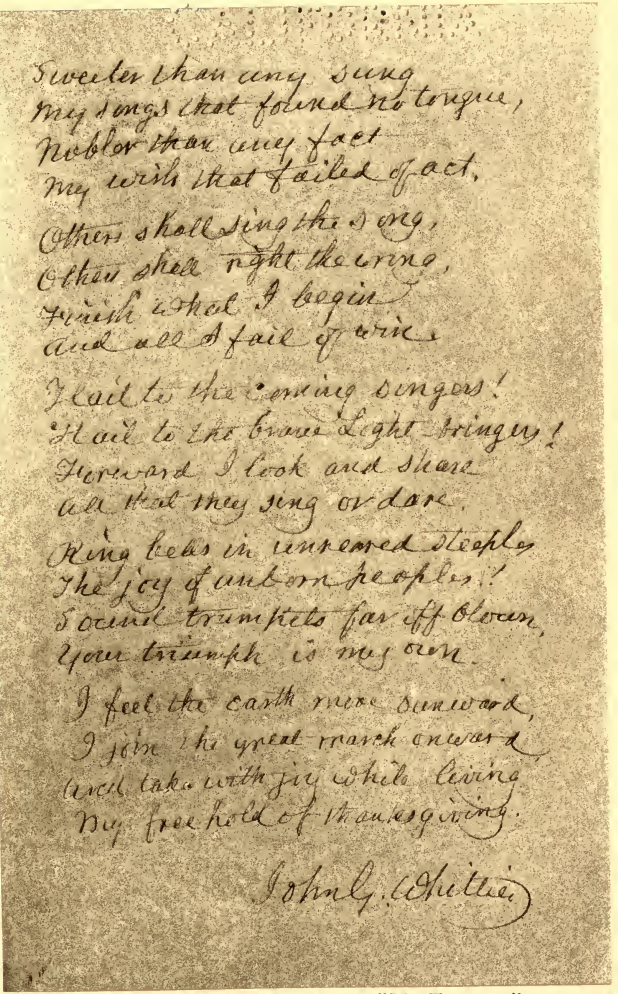
New England and seemed to be the audible voice of lamentation over the fall of a great champion of the cause of freedom. In *Ichabod* Whittier rose to sublime heights of invective; he branded Daniel Webster with the shame of betraying his principles for political ambition, yet this he did more in sorrow than in anger. Much of this anti-slavery work is now dead and meaningless, but enough remains with the glow of life to show what tremendous force resided in the pale, scholarly recluse whose words were aglow with patriotism. But much of Whittier's work was done in other fields of verse. The New England of the olden time is seen in *Skipper Ireson's Ride*, while that of a later day is reproduced in such charming work as *Snow-Bound* and *Among the Hills*. The beauty of the soul is revealed in *My Playmate* and *In School Days*, two perfect poems that in genuine pathos are equal to anything that Wordsworth ever wrote. Longfellow expressed the strong spiritual quality in Whittier's verse in these fine lines:

> Thou too hast heard
> Voices and melodies from beyond the gates,
> And speakest only when thy soul is stirred!

Whittier is one of the few American

poets who sings of life on the farm with real enthusiasm. He was born on a farm at Haverhill, Massachusetts, and, despite his bodily weakness, he knew what farm labor was as well as the sports in which country boys delight. Born December 17, 1807, he was nineteen when his first poem was published in the Newburyport Free Press. The editor of that paper was William Lloyd Garrison, afterward the great anti-slavery leader. So impressed was Garrison with the ability of the writer of this poem and another which followed it, that he visited Whittier's home and urged him to attend the neighboring academy. Whittier's father was a hard-working Quaker farmer, who did not believe in anything but the virtues of labor and thrift, but the editor of the Haverhill Gazette having promised to give the boy a home in his family, the father yielded and the lad was permitted to take up the making of cheap slippers in order to earn enough money to carry him through one term at the academy. School teaching and bookkeeping furnished the funds for a second term, which made up all Whittier's regular education.

Like all great writers, Whittier had read


Sweeter than any song
My songs that found no tongue,
Nobler than any fact
My wish that failed of act.

Others shall sing the song,
Others shall right the wrong,
Finish what I begin
And all I fail of win.

Hail to the coming singers!
Hail to the brave Light bringers!
Forward I look and share
All that they sing or dare.

Ring bells in unreared steeples
The joy of unborn peoples!
Sound trumpets far off blown,
Your triumph is my own.

I feel the earth move sunward,
I join the great march onward,
And take with joy while living
My free-hold of thanksgiving.

John G. Whittier

FACSIMILE OF THE MANUSCRIPT "MY TRIUMPH,"
BY JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

widely and, after his brief school life, he entered a Haverhill newspaper office, one of the best of training schools. There and in Boston he continued to edit newspapers and to write poems. His first published work was *Legends of New England*, issued in 1831.

As a youth Whittier had taken the keenest interest in the anti-slavery cause, and it was in recognition of his services that he was appointed a delegate to the National Anti-Slavery Society. He served terms in the Massachusetts State Senate and Legislature, and in 1836 moved to Amesbury, Massachusetts, where he made his home as long as he lived. He was extremely active in the anti-slavery cause for the next four years. Then he began writing for the NATIONAL ERA in Washington. One of his early books was *Voices of Freedom*, issued in 1849. He had the distinction of contributing a poem to the first number of the ATLANTIC MONTHLY in 1857 and in the same year the well-known Blue and Gold Edition of his poems was published. Then came the Civil War, which called out some fine poems, the most noteworthy of which is *Laus Deo*, celebrating the passage of the constitutional amendment

abolishing slavery. It was one year before the war ended that Whittier lost the beloved sister whose death he commemorated a year after in the exquisite lines in *Snow-Bound*. In Whittier's last years his heart was warmed by the great public appreciation of his poetical work. He was asked to write the Centennial hymn for the Philadelphia Exposition, and his seventieth birthday was marked by a great banquet given by his publishers in his honor to the contributors to the Atlantic Monthly. The speeches and the letters which this called out showed the high place which Whittier occupied in public regard. The poet died in 1892, full of years and honors.

It is needless to look for great dramatic force or unusual passion in Whittier's work. His poems reflect the calm of his life, which was broken only in his youth by the storm and stress of anti-slavery agitation. Had it not been for his Quaker training he would have been found in the ranks of the early volunteers fighting for the cause which he had aided with his pen. The anti-slavery poems, most of them suggested by events of the day, fill nearly one hundred double-column pages in his

complete works. They begin with tributes to Toussaint L'Ouverture and to Garrison, and they range from fiery denunciation of the holders of slaves to songs of rejoicing over the spread of the cause of freedom. Of all these poems the one which appealed most powerfully to the public fancy was *Barbara Frietchie*, which is known to every American child in the public schools. Many fine poems are included in this collection of wartime lyrics, among which may be named *What the Birds Said*, *After the War*, *To Englishmen* and *The Watchers*. These are all instinct with the finest spirit of poetry while they sound the ringing battle-cry of freedom that still has power to stir the blood like the blast of a trumpet.

Of all Whittier's work *Snow-Bound* reaches the highest level of inspiration. It is a picture of New England home life in midwinter, of the family fireside painted with the truth and dignity of a Dutch genre artist, and of the tales told about the chimney corner when the wind roared about the roof-tree and the sleet beat upon the window panes. The sketches of his parents, his beloved sister and of the other persons in the household are fine examples of Whittier's skill in portraiture; but the

lines that lift this poem to the highest plane of inspiration are those in lament over the sister who passed from life and thought only a year before. These are words that bring tears to the eyes of all readers who have lost one near and dear. John Bright, the most eloquent of English parliamentary speakers of the last century, declared this tribute to be the finest he had ever read. The prelude to *Among the Hills* rises to rare flights in its picture of what American country life should be. In *The Tent on the Beach* Whittier produced a poem that reveals some of his best work. It is a collection of short poems demonstrating Whittier's easy mastery of many forms of verse.

Many other poems of Whittier's deserve mention here, but if anyone will read the poems named in this article, he will be pretty sure to keep Whittier on his book shelf as a constant companion. From no other books of verse can one get surer light on the blessings that come from unselfish love and kindly thoughts of others, or a better guide to the beauties of nature that keep the heart young and the mind open to all the sweet influences of the birds and the trees and all growing things.

Thoreau
The Pioneer Writer About Nature

The Recluse of Walden Pond, Who First Showed the World How to Live the Simple Life and How to Enjoy Nature.

It is only within the last decade that the full stature of Henry D. Thoreau has been appreciated or his services as an original thinker have been valued. Howells says of his *Walden*: "I do not believe Tolstoi himself has more clearly shown the hollowness, the hopelessness, the unworthiness of the life of the world than Thoreau did in that book." Only a little over sixty years ago nature study was unknown in America, and to Thoreau belongs the distinction of being the pioneer of this literature of life in the open air. But he was far more than a remarkable student and observer of nature; he was an original

thinker who foretold many of the problems of our day, especially those which have arisen from the congestion of thousands of the poor in all large American cities. Above all, he was a philosopher who carried the doctrine of individuality to its extreme limit and who believed that a great part of the work done in this world is wasted because its results are spent on food, drink and raiment that are not necessary to one's comfort or happiness.

Not even in the books of John Muir or John Burroughs will one find such pure enjoyment of mountain scenery, or such awe and reverence for the spirit of nature as may be found in Thoreau's records of mountain climbing or of his days spent in the woods, far from the haunts of men. Many have imitated Thoreau in his search for what is now called the "simple life," but no one has equaled him in his capacity for absorbing the spirit of wild nature or his contentment with solitary life in the woods. Companionship means so much to the great majority of people that they cannot understand a man whose nature made no demand for any associate in his tramps or any sharer in his rapture over a glorious view from a mountain summit.

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HENRY DAVID THOREAU
IN 1854
FROM THE CRAYON DRAWING BY S. W. ROWSE
IN THE CONCORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Thoreau was a natural hermit, but he was eminently companionable when anyone invaded his haunts. His nature simply ignored the usual fondness for friends or associates. He was the pioneer in a new style of writing about nature, but though others have caught much of his skill in making the woods and the mountains real to their readers, they could not secure that subtle element of personality which colors all of Thoreau's work and makes it unique.

Many lovers of nature impress one as profoundly affected by noble scenery, but still one fancies that these excursions into the wild life are simply vacations from prosaic pursuits in the big cities. Not so with Thoreau. When he writes about walking, or about autumnal tints, or about birds, the reader knows at once that his conclusions are the result of much experience. In a word, his mind was saturated with many impressions, and his chief labor seems to have been to select such as would prove the most striking.

For months Thoreau studied all the birds and small animals that frequented the woods in which he built his cabin on the shore of Walden pond. When he made

notes on these wild creatures they represented many observations, not the impressions of a pedestrian who passed through this part of Massachusetts on a walking trip. The same sureness of fact, the same reserve of knowledge, is seen in everything that he wrote. Throughout all his essays one has this sense of being admitted to share in only a few of the pleasures of this scholarly recluse, whose eyes were as keen as those of the professional hunter, but who had none of the hunter's lust for killing the wild creatures of the woods.

As Thoreau had unusual gifts as a writer, he was able to make the reader see what impressed him. Much of this work was in the form of elaborate notes and journals left behind him, for Thoreau was one of those unhappy authors who gained no reputation during his lifetime. His brilliant work fell flat because the public of his time was far more interested in such sentimental rhapsodies as Chateaubriand poured forth in *Atala* or Rousseau in his morbid confessions than in the real impressions of a genuine student of nature. Four years after the issue of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers* Thoreau records with grim humor the fact that he

bought 703 copies out of an edition of 1000 and stacked them up in his chamber in a pile half as high as his head. "This," he says, "is authorship; these are the work of my brain." Yet no sooner was he dead than all the work which he left behind him, including a half-dozen volumes of journals, was printed and found thousands of readers. Although most of his writing was done in the forties of the last century, it is as readable today as when it was first written.

The closest friend of Thoreau was Emerson, although the Sage of Concord was perhaps his sharpest critic, and it was Emerson who furnished the biographical sketch which prefaced the first complete edition of Thoreau's works. Thoreau, of mixed Saxon and French blood, was born in Concord in 1817, and was graduated from Harvard in his twentieth year. His father was a manufacturer of lead pencils, but the son showed no inclination to enter upon any commercial pursuit.

After six years devoted to teaching, Thoreau decided to live in the woods and do only so much work as would suffice to maintain him in comfort. He built a cabin on Walden pond, near Concord, and for

two years led the simple life. His wants were so few that he was able to live well for two years on less money than one in a city would spend in a month. His time he devoted to study and reading and to patient observation of the birds and animals about his house. Yet his life in this cabin was never squalid.

It is evident that Thoreau often irritated Emerson by his passion for controversy. Thoreau accepted nothing for granted, and he seemed to have a mania for protesting against all that others accepted. One of his fads was the unwholesome life of the city; another was the small value of a college education. He had no genius for friendship. In fact, one of his friends summed up his unsocial nature in this way: "I love Henry, but I cannot like him; and as for taking his arm, I should as soon think of taking the arm of an elm tree."

In *Walden* will be found the best revelation of Thoreau's personality. The man was absolutely independent. As Emerson said, he had no passions, no desires, no ambitions; he was sufficient unto himself; he never felt the need of companionship. Every day saw him take four or five hours



THOREAU'S COVE, WALDEN POND
SHOWING INDIAN PATH ALONG SHORE

of good, wholesome exercise in the open air. Then he returned to his books or his writing with the same zest that a city man returns to work after social pleasures or the theatre. His hunger was satisfied with the simplest food, which he prepared himself. He devoted much time to the patient study of all the wild creatures that frequented the woods in which he had built his house. He sets down minutely the cost of his living and finds that for six months he had actually lived for a sum which would not have sustained him one week in any big city.

Walden is Thoreau's best work, but there is much readable matter in *The Maine Woods*, *Cape Cod* and *Excursions*. Thoreau was a natural writer, with a genius for style and with that devotion to detail which makes his journals such good reading. Here is an extract from his essay on *Walking:*

> Where is the literature which gives expression to Nature? He would be a poet who could impress the winds and streams into his service, to speak for him; who transplanted words to his pages with earth adhering to their roots; whose words were so true and fresh and natural that they would appear to expand like the buds at the approach of spring, though they lay half smothered between two musty leaves in a library. * * * I do not know any poetry to quote which adequately expresses this yearning for the Wild. Approached from this side, the best poetry is tame.

Thoreau wrote some poetry, but it bears a striking resemblance to Emerson's verse, and it has not appealed to the public. Among his notes of journeys and observations Thoreau was fond of interpolating his views on transcendental philosophy. He was a New England pagan, with absolutely no reverence for religious authority and with apparently little interest in any religious doctrine. This mental attitude irritated Emerson, who could not conceive of any human being without a strong curiosity about the purpose of the universe and a great hunger to know something of the future life.

Thoreau's fame is sure because he wrote only of the things that he loved, and his style is far finer and richer than the style of most of his famous contemporaries. Men like Alcott looked upon Thoreau as deficient in the essential qualities of a great writer, but the years have brought their revenges, and today Thoreau is read by thousands who know the leader of Transcendentalism only as a name.

Francis Parkman's Historical Work

Although Half Blind and an Invalid He Described the Long Struggle Between France and England for Canada.

Of all American historians Francis Parkman seems to me to deserve first place because of a peculiar combination of gifts and because he had the good fortune to select for his subject the most picturesque episode in our history. Parkman himself is always associated in my mind with Stevenson as a literary worker. No two men ever differed more widely in character or in work; but both were invalids, both struggled against tremendous handicaps of physical disability and both produced an amount of good literature that would have done credit to the strongest man of letters. Parkman, in fact, was

in worse case than the author of *Treasure Island*, because in addition to his other physical ailments he was practically blind for years and was forced to depend upon others to do his reading. Nearly all his work was dictated, yet it bears no evidence of such literary method. At one time his literary work was set aside for several years while he devoted himself to the culture of roses. It takes a robust will and iron determination to pursue a literary scheme in the face of constant illness; yet this Parkman accomplished with so little outward sign of suffering that John Fiske, one of his friends who met him frequently at club dinners, never knew that he was an invalid until after his death.

It is seldom that a college boy in his sophomore year decides definitely upon his life work and begins to prepare himself for it. Yet this was what Parkman did at Harvard when he was eighteen years old. He came to the conclusion that he would write the history of the conflict in America between France and England — the "Old French War," as it was called, which ended in the conquest of Canada. This was really the history of the American forest, which from his boyhood had a strong fasci-



Francis Parkman
From a Daguerreotype taken about 1844

nation for Parkman. To write this history adequately demanded intimate knowledge of the Indian tribes, then pushed westward beyond the Mississippi, and of the Canadian habitant and voyageur. During his college vacations and for several years after Parkman devoted himself to gaining first-hand information in regard to the scenes of this great conflict and the Indians who were the most picturesque actors in the struggle.

Parkman came of good old Devonshire stock, his ancestors migrating to New England from the same shire that produced Raleigh, Gilbert, Drake, Hawkins, and other great English adventurers. All his portraits show a massive chin which contrasts strangely with his refined face. This chin betrayed his leading trait — an iron determination which lifelong disease and pain could not shake. Parkman has been well described as a "passionate Puritan." He had all the stoicism of the Puritan, with an eager spirit which flamed into sudden enthusiasms. A natural aristocrat, this feeling did not breed any contempt for the working class, but rather a determination to prove that not even illness should exempt him from a man's work

in the world. His favorite book was the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius. He was as great a stoic as the Roman Emperor, and much of his outlook on life was purely pagan, though no man had keener sympathy with the poor and the unfortunate.

When a gymnasium was opened in Harvard during his junior year, young Parkman made the great mistake of trying to crowd into six months the athletic work which should have been spread over six years. He injured his health so badly that he was unable to begin his senior year with his class. Instead he spent the time abroad, but returned in time to take his degree and begin the study of law. The following year Parkman took a trip to Detroit to study the scenes of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, the first of his studies of the great conflict between the French and the English for this huge Western Empire. He interviewed everyone of antiquarian tastes, made topographical studies, and gathered a mass of notes which gave life to his history.

This trip showed Parkman that he must go further west if he would see the Indian before the vices of civilization robbed him of his ancient traits and customs. So the

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Francis Parkman
From a Photograph taken in 1882
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next year, in company with Quincy A. Shaw, a fellow-enthusiast in the study of Cooper and Catlin, Parkman set out for a trip to California and Oregon. This was in the Spring of 1846, three years before the great gold rush to California. The whole country west of the Rocky Mountains was then the territory of Oregon, and Parkman saw thoroughly only the region now known as Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. He and Shaw lived with the Ogillallah tribe and accompanied the chiefs on hunting expeditions and even upon a war raid on the Snake Indians. It was a fine opportunity to study the Indian as he lived, but it cost Parkman very dear, for living exclusively on a meat diet he was attacked by dysentery and reduced to great weakness. Only his iron will kept him in the saddle and led him to undertake alone a hard trip in order to see two Indian tribes on the warpath. He accumulated a mass of material and in early fall returned to the East.

The poor food, exposure and violent exertion of this trip resulted in an affection of the eyes which threatened blindness. For two years Parkman was greatly reduced, but during this heavy siege of

illness he dictated *The Oregon Trail*, the fine record of his Western trip, which aroused little interest at the time, although it has since been recognized as one of the best studies of the blanket Indians of the plains.

From this time the story of Parkman's life is the record of an unwearied fight against disease and pain. In the spring of 1848, when his sufferings were at their worst, he decided to begin the story of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* at Detroit, which, had it succeeded, would have changed the history of France in the New World. To permit him to write he had a wired frame constructed, of the size of a sheet of letter-paper, with a pasteboard back. The paper was inserted between the pasteboard and the wires and, guided by these wires, Parkman could write with a black lead crayon, with closed eyes. Part of the first volume of his history was composed in this way and part was dictated. The authorities which he had gathered were read to him. In this painful way, during two and a half years, the book was slowly prepared. It betrays no sign of the author's hard work. In picturesque description, in freshness of interest,

and in a certain charm of style, it scored a great success. The best critics declared that the book was as readable as a novel, because Parkman's Indians were real flesh and blood, and Pontiac was a leader who aroused the reader's keen interest.

After the publication of his first book troubles fell upon Parkman thick and fast. He lost his wife and his little boy and was left with two young daughters. His maladies increased so that he could do no work for two years. But his fortitude remained unbroken and at his country home at Jamaica Pond he devoted himself to the culture of roses. When, finally, he was able to resume his literary work he found that his rose garden had saved him from bitterness.

So he set about his chosen work which engrossed him for nearly thirty years. The first volume was *The Pioneers of France in the New World* and this was followed by *The Jesuits in North America*, *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*, *The Old Régime*, *Frontenac*, *A Half Century of Conflict* and *Montcalm and Wolfe*. For each of these Parkman made laborious researches, having thousands of pages of manuscript copied from the

archives in Paris and London and from letters found in Montreal and Quebec. He read all the Jesuit Relations — one hundred volumes of the manuscript reports of French missionaries in Canada to the home office in Paris.

The reader who does not know Parkman may begin safely with any of the series, but I would recommend either *Pontiac* or *Montcalm and Wolfe*, after a reading of *The Oregon Trail*. In any of Parkman's histories the reader will be impressed by the clearness of the narrative, the splendid portraits of the great characters, the graphic pictures of wild life in the Western wilderness and the scholarly fair-minded conclusions that he reaches after close study of all the facts. His sympathies, naturally, were with the English, and he came in for some sharp criticism from French-Canadians, but he had warm friends among this race who believed in his impartiality. From English critics Parkman received unstinted praise. To the sympathetic reader Parkman's real self will be seen in the ardor with which he described the bravery and endurance of such heroes as Champlain and La Salle, Tonty and Wolfe.

Mark Twain Our Finest Humorist

Sprung From Poverty, He Won Fame by "The Innocents Abroad" — His Best Book "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."

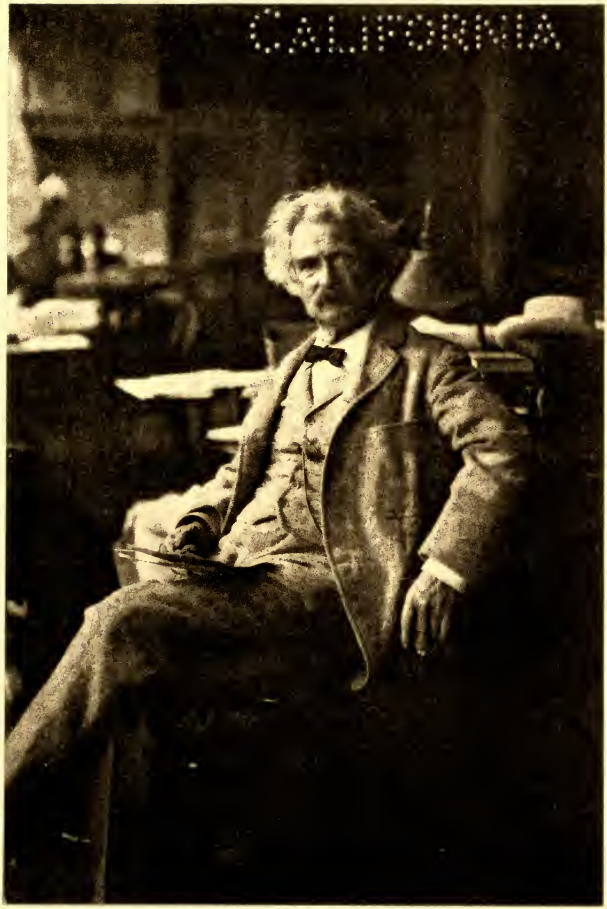
If a canvas of intelligent readers were made in any Western State today, the first place among American men of letters would be given by popular vote to Mark Twain. The East does not yet hold him in the same high regard, but every year sees a gain in his popularity with the reading public. More American than Whitman himself, he appeals to a very wide audience because he is not only the ablest of our humorists, but in his later years he proved that he was a novelist of the first rank as well as an historian and a philosopher. It took Mark Twain many years to live down the idea that he was simply a teller

of funny stories; but *Huckleberry Finn* and the *Recollections of Joan of Arc* abundantly proved that he was far more than a humorist.

In no other country could Mark Twain have reached such eminence as he enjoyed during the last ten years of his life. It is a far cry from the barefooted boy of Hannibal, Missouri, to the first citizen of New York. Occasionally in Europe is seen such a spectacular rise as that of Lloyd-George, but in the main the political and literary honors in the Old World belong to those born to ample leisure and fortune. Had Mark Twain been born abroad he would probably have remained a printer or a river pilot. In this country, where opportunity beckons to everyone who has brains and ambition, Mark Twain dropped piloting and took up newspaper work, which proved, as in the case of many American authors, the stepping-stone to success.

The life of Mark Twain affords a good example of the splendid opportunities in America open to those who have the ability to grasp them. Mark Twain had something more than mere literary talent; he had genius of the highest order, for only genius will explain the astonishing develop-

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Mark Twain
From a Photograph. Copyright 1905 by
Harper & Brothers

ment of his literary faculty in an environment which was distinctly hostile to any imaginative work. The poor boy of Hannibal, Missouri, had no advantages beyond those of his companions, but like most of the famous American writers he was a tireless reader and early in life he drifted into a printing office, that training school which inspired Whitman, Howells and Bret Harte. There he found the tools which he learned to use so deftly; but his was no sudden success. Probably the rough life of Nevada and California in early mining days served to develop his humorous ability and *The Jumping Frog of Calaveras*, a very amusing story which he heard told by a miner in the California foothills, first made his name known from Atlantic to Pacific. Then came lecturing and the Great Opportunity. This was nothing less than the first organized pleasure excursion to the Old World. Out of it came *The Innocents Abroad*, which set a new record for books of travel, and established Mark Twain's fame as a humorist.

This book should have demonstrated that its author was among the greatest of prose writers, because scattered through it are brilliant pages of description and fine

bits of philosophy, all couched in a style that is true, strong and original. But the great public paid no attention to anything except the jokes and the delightfully irreverent passages in which this new humorist flayed the travel writers of the old school. Many since Mark Twain's day have expressed their lack of appreciation of the Old Masters, but it remained for him to kill by savage ridicule the absurd affectations of those who simply followed in the footsteps of former critics. No one can read the chapters on the Holy Land without being impressed by Mark Twain's graphic pictures of sacred shrines now in the hands of the Unspeakable Turk. These chapters reveal the author's genuine reverence as well as his close study of the Bible. Years after, Mark Twain wrote *A Tramp Abroad*, in which he followed the route of his first pilgrimage, but though this book is written with more artistic finish, it lacks the rollicking fun and the spontaneity of the early work.

Life on the Mississippi — an autobiography with some imaginative touches—is one of Mark Twain's great books. As readable as a novel, it takes you back to those old days when passenger boats ran



MARK TWAIN'S BIRTHPLACE. THE HOUSE BUILT BY JUDGE CLEMENS IN 1836 (NOW DESTROYED) WAS OFTEN POINTED OUT AS THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE HUMORIST

up and down the great river from St. Louis to New Orleans, and when the pilot of one of these fine steamers was as great a man as the driver of a six-horse stage coach in Nevada. You see at once that Mark Twain loved this life on the river and that it is pure joy for him to tell of his hard training as a cub pilot and of the many episodes that marked his life at the wheel. With consummate art he has told this story of a strange life, so that today it is one of his most popular books in this country as well as in France and Germany.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn followed in the next season — two masterpieces in successive years. *Tom Sawyer* is a book for boys, although thousands of mature readers have enjoyed it. It is a faithful picture of the author's boyhood in a sleepy little Mississippi river town, and as a study of boy psychology it has never been surpassed; but it is not literature in the same sense that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is literature. Many readers bracket these two books together, but they have little in common except their literary art. All the details of Huckleberry Finn serve to paint the most graphic picture ever drawn of life in the

Southern States before the War. The freeing of the negro Jim from the calaboose, the floating of Huck and Jim down the Mississippi on their raft, the advent of the two tramps and their remarkable adventures, the episode of the terrible blood feud — all these go to make up a unique book. It was literary genius that impelled Mark Twain to write this book without elaborating the great scenes. This makes the Grangerford-Shepperdson family feud one of the most impressive things in all literature. One can fancy the fun Mark got out of the tricks of the Duke and the King, who are among the most lovable rogues in picaresque fiction. If you think my praise of this book too high take down the book and read it again. I think you will agree with me that as pure literature it is worthy of a place among the great books of the world.

Mark Twain always had a keen desire to show that the "good old times" did not compare with the present age. This resulted in two very attractive stories — *The Prince and the Pauper* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.* The first is a delightful romance full of real pathos and humanity, which has warmed

the heart of many youthful readers. The second is Mark Twain's tremendous onslaught upon British class tyranny and time-honored privilege. Through the person of the Connecticut Yankee the American vents his hatred of many British institutions, but he is so extravagant in his language that he defeats his own purpose. The book, which should have been one of Mark Twain's best, is really one of his worst because of its many artistic blemishes.

The great romance in Mark Twain's life was his passion for Joan of Arc. When a boy he picked up in the street a scrap of paper containing an outline of the life and the terrible tragedy of the Maid of Orleans, and this incited him to read everything he could find about her. Twelve years he devoted to reading and research and two years to the actual writing of the *Recollections of Joan of Arc*. The result is not his best book, as he fondly imagined, because his genius did not move as freely in the past as in the present, but it is a splendid historical picture, full of that spiritual power which will make it endure as long as the language in which it was written.

Of Clemens, the man, as contrasted with Mark Twain, the author, it is a pleasure to say that he developed with the years from a rather hard, irreverent, frequently cruel humorist into one of the wisest and most lovable of men. Much of this refinement was due to the daily influence of the wife whom he adored and of association with men like Howells, Warner and the Rev. Joseph Twichell, who was his constant companion. No American author during his life enjoyed his popularity more than Mark Twain, and none was so singularly honored in England. His later years were clouded with many sorrows, but through all he preserved the sweetness of his nature. To meet many authors is a keen disappointment, as they reveal petty traits and unlovely characters; but no one ever met Mark Twain without being impressed by his great sincerity and his goodness of heart.

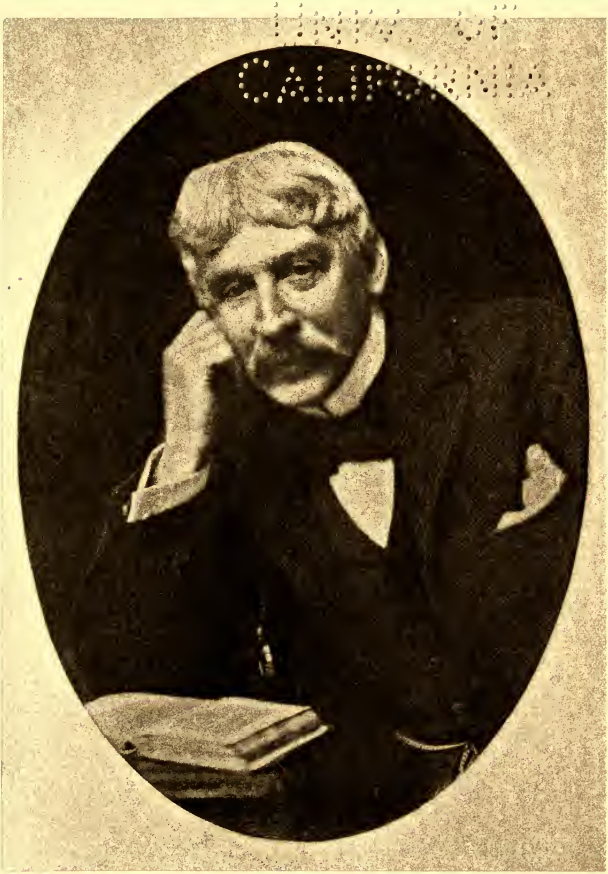
Bret Harte's California Tales and Poems

Pioneer Life Among Gold Miners Mirrored By a Master of the Short Story — One of the Great Artists in Verse.

Bret Harte is the one writer of undoubted genius who made California and its pioneers known around the world. His creative activity ran over forty-five years, yet in all that time he seldom chose any other scene for his stories than the early California which he knew so well. Only one side of that pioneer life he painted with such remarkable clearness and force that every reader saw it with his eyes. It was the purely adventurous life of the California mining camps that Bret Harte exploited with the same fidelity that Kipling has pictured the life of the Englishman in India. The miner who varies

feverish work with long bouts at the faro table, the professional gambler, the stage-driver, the lawyer, the dance-hall keeper, the harlot and the Chinaman — these are Bret Harte's leading types. He makes them all picturesque, but in none of his stories does he give any glimpse of that other life led by many pioneers — that life of hard work, careful saving and ultimate wealth which led to the unparalleled development of California. He never touches on the men who built schools and churches and laid the foundations of New England life in a new and sunnier land.

Bret Harte was largely self-educated. Forced by the death of his father to work in an office at the early age of nine years, he gained by reading what ordinary school boys acquire by painstaking study. At eighteen he left Albany, his native city, and went to California, where his mother had married again. It was his good fortune to be a school-teacher and an express messenger in the foothill counties of California in the late fifties — the period which witnessed the decline and end of placer mining. Less than a year Harte spent in this land of the pioneer miners, yet in that short time he gained impressions



Bret Harte
From a Photograph taken by Hollyer in 1896

of scenes and characters upon which he drew for over forty years, while working in an alien land among alien people. In one of his reminiscent sketches he speaks of his "eager absorption of the strange life around me and a photographic sensitiveness to certain scenes and incidents." This is as good a description as has ever been given of creative literary genius.

Like many other American authors, Bret Harte became a compositor, and it was this work in a printing office which stimulated him to write. He finally drifted to San Francisco and there, after several ventures on weekly newspapers, he became the editor of a new magazine, the OVERLAND MONTHLY. To the second number of this magazine Harte contributed *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, a short story brimfull of the dare-devil, hilarious spirit of early California mining days. The broad humor, the defiance of all social conventions, the mingled pathos and art of this story, attracted the American reading public and when this story was followed by another short masterpiece, *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* and a striking humorous poem, *The Heathen Chinee*, Harte gained a national reputation almost in a day.

A Boston publishing house paid him $10,000 for the exclusive right to everything which he should write in a year. If the firm had known him better it would never have made such a bargain, for he did little for the money. For several years he wrote short stories and sketches and lectured throughout the country. Then he secured a consulship at Crefeld, Germany, and soon after a similar post at Glasgow. Seven years of this consular service sufficed. Thereafter he lived in London and produced about a book a year for many years. Exile from California seemed to lend force to his imagination, for some of his best work was done in his later years.

The poetical output of Bret Harte was comparatively small, but this verse is of high quality. Like his prose it reveals the hand of the master-craftsman. Many of the Spanish legends of early California Harte has put into beautiful verse. His is the best bit of poetry on San Francisco and his is also the finest poetical tribute on the death of Dickens. *The Heathen Chinee* — the most famous of Harte's poems — was written in the metre of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, which

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On the Simplicity of Ah Sin.
As reported by Truthful James

While I rise to remark —
And my language is plain —
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar.
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
And I shall not deny
In regard to the same
~~That the misdeeds same~~
What that name might imply,
But his smile it was pensive and childlike
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

FACSIMILE OF A PAGE OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF THE FAMOUS POEM "THE HEATHEN CHINEE" BY BRET HARTE

has since become popular with humorous bards.

The best way to make the acquaintance of Bret Harte is through *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches*. These short stories are all in perfect form. My favorite is *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*, which tells of the adventures of four disreputables who have been evicted from the mining camp of Poker Flat. They expect to cross the mountain divide and reach a neighboring camp, but Uncle Billy, a hanger-on about saloons, smells the coming snowstorm and deserts his companions in the night, taking the pack-animals and most of the provisions. John Oakhurst, a professional gambler, is left with two women, Old Mother Shipton and a handsome damsel, known as "The Duchess." The outcasts are joined by a young couple who have eloped and are on their way to Poker Flat to be married. Oakhurst knows that their fate is sealed, as the first snowfall in the Sierra is usually heavy, but he keeps this knowledge from his companions, as well as any revelations about the character of the outcasts from the two innocents. The story of this camp among the snows is beautifully told, with many

humorous touches, such as the tale of the Iliad related by the young rustic who refers to the swift-footed Achilles as "Ash-heels." The other campers perish of cold and hunger, but Oakhurst's body is found near by, with a derringer bullet through the brain, and these last words, written on the deuce of clubs, pinned to a pine tree with his bowie knife — "Struck a streak of bad luck and passed in his checks."

Tennessee's Partner is another perfect short story which relates the fidelity of a miner for his partner, although that partner had stolen his wife. Tennessee is the evil partner, but when he returned to the lonely cabin after this escapade, he was forgiven. Seized by a Vigilance Committee for holding up a man on the stage road, he is being given a fair trial when the partner appears and pouring all of his gold-dust on the table offers it as a ransom for Tennessee. This attempt to bribe Judge Lynch proved fatal to the accused man and he was promptly hanged. Then came the faithful partner with his little donkey and cart containing the home-made coffin. He cut down the body of his friend and carried it away in the coffin for burial. The story is an idyl of fidelity that is

stronger than death and it is told with a simple pathos that is never theatrical. Observe the last page of this story, giving the account of the partner's death, with its touches of rare pathos.

The works of Bret Harte fill nineteen volumes, of which only two are devoted to subjects outside of California. Harte was essentially a short-story writer, his only long romance, *Gabriel Conroy*, being poorly constructed and lacking in continuous interest. It was an attempt to put into the form of fiction the terrible tragedy of the Donner party, many of whom perished in the snow near the Summit, only a few rods away from the main overland trail. Yet this book contains the finest description of Winter in the High Sierra, and it is full of humor in the relations of Gabriel and his shrewd, managing little sister.

Bret Harte has drawn in his stories a gallery of characters that appeal to the reader as real flesh and blood people. Among these may be mentioned the two professional gamblers, Oakhurst and Jack Hamlin, the typical Southern gentleman of the old school, Colonel Starbottle, and Yuba Bill, the spectacular stage-driver.

Harte possessed in supreme degree the faculty of describing a place or a character in a paragraph which clings to the memory. Above all, he seemed to have ever before his eyes a vision of the California foothills, with their dust-laden air, their pungent odors of pine and bay, and their background of the snow-crowned mountain wall of the Sierra Nevada. Endless was the variety of the tales he wove about these California scenes, but what makes them appeal powerfully to readers who have never seen the Far Western land that he celebrates, is the joy that he exhibits in the telling and the freshness and enthusiasm of his pictures of the State that he loved and made the whole world love with him.

Howells
First of Living American Novelists

A Genial Humorist Who Has Painted Many Phases of Our Social Life — His Books of Travel.

Probably the most popular of contemporary American men of letters is William Dean Howells, who easily ranks first among our living novelists. For over a half-century he has been one of the most prolific of American writers, yet not a single one of his novels or his books of essays or notes of travel can be called a pot-boiler. Howells began to write during the great Civil War and he has written steadily ever since, averaging about a book a year. Considering the large number of poems, plays, novels, essays, critical estimates of authors and travel sketches that he has produced, his average of excellence is very high.

Howells has all the New England traits, with a broader outlook which he gained from early association with the people of the Northern Reserve of Ohio. The Puritan strain was dominant among these settlers in Northern Ohio but the Western atmosphere was fatal to that class feeling which the intellectual New Englander inherits. So Howells, who very early showed great literary aptitude, escaped the narrowing influence of class prejudice. His boyish fancy turned to poetry, but nothing that he produced in verse is worthy to rank with his best prose work.

Like Franklin, Whitman, Mark Twain and Bret Harte, Howells' real education was secured in a country printing office of which his father was the proprietor. There is something about composition — the setting up in type by hand of other people's writing — which stimulates literary work. A boy with an insatiable craving for reading, if placed in a printing office, usually becomes a writer. Howells had enjoyed a high school education; he knew some Latin and a little Greek, and he had been an omnivorous reader. With a keen literary faculty he had the foundation laid for literary culture. With the strong desire



William Dean Howells
A Characteristic Portrait

to express his thought in verse he wrote much poetry which is above the average magazine standard, but this verse was forgotten when he began to express himself in his natural medium of prose.

When he was twenty-two years old and had had some experience as a reporter and correspondent for several Ohio newspapers, the youthful Howells made a pilgrimage to Boston. He had had several poems printed in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY and naturally his first visit was to Lowell, then editor of the magazine. Fifty years after, in *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*, Howells gives a remarkably readable account of this journey and of his first meeting with Lowell, Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Holmes, and others of the circle of New England writers who had made the ATLANTIC famous. They were as gods to him, but wonderful to relate, he found them all simple in manners, easily accessible and full of interest in his literary ambitions, except Emerson, whose aloofness chilled the enthusiastic neophyte. Howells also visited New York and saw the leading literary lights, but in neither city was he able to establish any connection, so he returned home. He did some

campaign work for Lincoln which secured him the consulate at Venice, with a salary of $1,500 a year. There he mastered Italian and gave himself up to the study of Dante and the great modern writers of Italy. These four years of literary leisure colored all his life. He wrote articles on Italian cities, afterwards grouped in *Venetian Life* and *Italian Journeys*, and he developed a prose style of singular flexibility and charm. On his return after the close of the Civil War Howells did some literary work on the New York Nation, but he gladly accepted the assistant-editorship of the Atlantic Monthly.

From that time, almost a full half-century ago, Howells has been a magazine editor, with the later years devoted wholly to literary work. He has written over thirty novels and romances, a dozen comedies and farces, and more than a dozen books of criticism, travel and reminiscence. Although his allegiance to Boston was very strong, Howells in 1887 established a connection with the Harpers, in New York and from that time all his books have borne the New York publishers' imprint, and most of his work has appeared first in the Harper periodicals.

Howells began his career as a novelist as far back as 1872 with *Their Wedding Journey*, a charming tale spiced with quiet humor, but it was *The Lady of the Aroostook*, issued seven years later, which first gave him fame. This is a story of the voyage of Lydia Blood, a New England girl, to Italy on one of the old sailing packets in order to study singing. She goes direct to Trieste, where a female cousin is to take the girl to her home in Venice. Her parents died during her childhood and she has made her home with her grandparents in a small New England village. Very amusing are the scenes describing the girl's trip to Boston with her grandfather and the arrangements for her voyage. Only when she is at sea does she discover that she is the only woman on the ship, even the cook being a negro man. But the captain treats her as he would treat one of his own girls, and the other passengers, three young men, are polite and considerate. One of these is a young aristocrat of Boston, who begins by ridicule of Lydia to his companion and ends by falling in love with the girl. The voyage is admirably described, the only sensational incident being the fall over-

board of one of the passengers who is a dipsomaniac and his rescue by Lydia's admirer. The best work in the book is devoted to Lydia's introduction to Italian life and customs at Venice. There we leave her happy in her love, after a week of suffering during which she believes that her lover has forsaken her. The book is noteworthy as giving a perfect picture of the New England temperament in contact with a strange environment. Although we may laugh at Lydia's ignorance of many things, yet we respect her for her truth, her common-sense and her independence.

Another novel by Howells which is typical is *A Modern Instance*, published in 1882. It is devoted to a full-length picture of a young American, Bartley Campbell, who marries Marcia, the daughter of an old lawyer. Bartley has one grave defect: he has no moral principle. If things had gone right with him he probably would have settled down into a quiet, conservative citizen. As it is, he gives way to a tendency to drink, and his moral degeneration is slow but sure. Mr. Howells, with rare power, shows us how inevitable is Bartley's decline after the first step in self-indulgence



Studio of William Dean Howells
The Interior of a Remodeled Stable, a Single,
Large, Sunny Room
Copyright 1911 by Harper & Brothers

and how this decline is stimulated by the jealous disposition of his wife. In the hands of a woman of tact Bartley might have been saved, but his wife simply aggravates his malady. Finally he abandons her, going out to Arizona, where he begins a secret suit for divorce. Marcia learns of this legal proceeding and with her old father journeys to the West to contest the suit. The figure of Bartley in the court-room — the once dapper, clean-cut young fellow now a bloated, shabby hanger-on about the courts, with his fat neck hanging over his greasy coat collar — will always remain in the reader's memory. Equally impressive is the figure of the old Judge, Marcia's father, who denounces the man who has ruined his daughter's life. Professor William Lyon Phelps compares this book with George Eliot's *Romola* and declares that the American novelist's picture of the gradual moral degeneration of Bartley Campbell is finer than the English author's sketch of the downfall of Tito Melima.

Other fine stories by Howells are *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, a powerful sketch of a self-made American, and *Indian Summer*, a comedy of the tangled relations of a

young girl and a middle-aged man and woman. Throughout half the book the man sincerely believes he is in love with the romantic young girl, as she believes that she loves him. There is very little action in the story, but the conversations are as witty as the dialogue in the third act of Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. All the talk between the two women is also admirably done. It is surprising that this book should have ceased to keep its hold on American readers, as it is far and away better than most of the humorous stories issued every year.

Howells has tried his hand at a number of farces, most of which are very good reading, but they have lacked action to succeed on the stage. His sketches of travel, of which he has written many volumes, are always readable, although of late he has fallen into the style of Henry James, which makes his work very hard reading. It is singular, the influence of Tolstoi upon Howells' later novels and the influence of James upon his style. During the last ten years Howells seems to fancy that he must have some moral doctrine to preach in his novels, with the result that his work reminds one of a religious tract

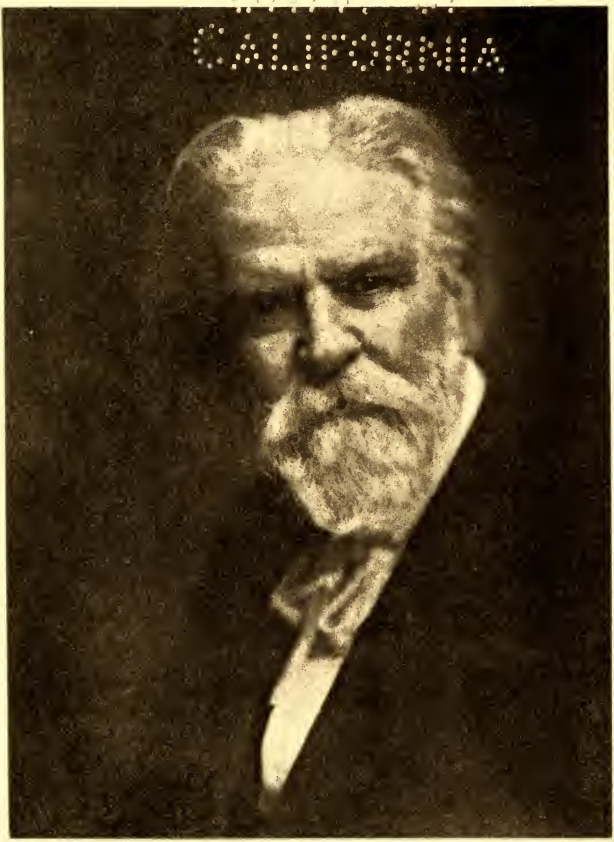
disguised as a novel. All the freshness and spontaneity that marked his earlier novels is gone. Then, too, he seems to think, with Mr. James, that his thought cannot be expressed in simple language, but must be elaborated and refined to the last degree. The result is the loss of that simple, flexible style which was once his greatest charm.

It is perhaps in reminiscence that Mr. Howells is most happy. In *A Boy's Town* he has described happily and with great humor his boyhood in an Ohio village, while in *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* he has sketched most deftly the life of Cambridge and the great figures in New England literature of forty years ago. To Howells also belongs the credit of having encouraged and aided by his wise advice many of the successful American writers of today.

Markham
The Poet of the American People

Wallace Called Him "The Greatest Poet of the Social Passion" — Fame Came to the Californian With "The Man With the Hoe."

Edwin Markham and William Dean Howells I have selected as the best representatives of living American spiritual writers because of their work and their influence. In looking over the field of contemporary American authors one is apt to be misled by the ephemeral popularity of certain writers who shrewdly respond to the literary demands of the time. Or he is inclined to give too great prominence to literary skill, as in the case of Henry James, who was acclaimed by leading English and American critics as one of the greatest of our writers, yet whose works are written in a style so involved and so



Edwin Markham
From a Favorite Photograph of Mr. Markham
Taken by W. E. Dassonville,
San Francisco

artificial that in my judgment the next generation will refuse to read any of his books except *Daisy Miller*. The tendency of our own day is toward the undue emphasis of sex problems in literature and on the stage, and so greatly has this warped our literary judgment that the coming generation will be amazed at the popularity of certain books of this period and at the moral decadence of the stage and the decline of good acting. In fact, we have reached the climax of the gross and the vulgar on the stage just as we have neared the limit in the foolish fad of cabaret-dancing and the popular mania for moving pictures. These things cannot become permanent without seriously impairing the very fibre of American character. Without a strong reaction from the present rage for indecent plays, foolish or brutal moving pictures and erotic fiction, American life is doomed to a far lower plane than it now occupies. England and France were both being weakened in the same way, when the war came and served as the most drastic check to all literary and social heresies founded on lack of sound moral character.

Edwin Markham I have taken as the

foremost of the new writers of our period because of his moral force and his keen sympathy with the struggles of those who work with their hands. Coming up, as he did, from the ranks of manual labor, securing an education by hard work and painful self-denial, he has a feeling for the working classes which no one can share who has not earned his bread in the sweat of his brow. Had he written nothing more than *The Man With the Hoe* he would have been worthy of a place among the great laureates of labor; but in both prose and verse he has done fine work in helping to secure better conditions in mills and factories, and especially in protecting young children from the selfishness of parents and employers.

Markham's natural method of expression is a free blank verse, which he handles with great ease and power. As he says himself, his thought unconsciously crystallizes in this form of verse, although he is skilful in handling various poetical metres. Before he wrote the poem which suddenly flashed his fame around the world, he had written some fine sonnets and other poems, all of which were tinged with his deep earnestness. Early in his career he was

profoundly stirred by a photographic reproduction of Millet's "The Man With the Hoe", and some of the thoughts which it inspired he cast in poetic form. More than a decade later he saw the original painting in the art gallery of a San Francisco millionaire. As Markham himself says:

"Millet's 'The Man With the Hoe' is to me the most solemnly impressive of all modern paintings. As I look upon the august ruin that it pictures I sometimes dare to think that its strength surpasses the power of Michael Angelo. * * * For an hour I stood before the painting, absorbing the majesty of its despair, the tremendous import of its admonition. I stood there, the power and the terror of the thing growing upon my heart, the pity and sorrow of it eating into my soul. It came to me with a dim echo in it of my own life — came with its pitiless pathos and mournful grandeur."

Markham was so deeply moved by this study of Millet's picture that he took up his original draft, expanded it, and produced the poem as it stands today. At a meeting of a literary club in San Francisco he read this poem, which so greatly im-

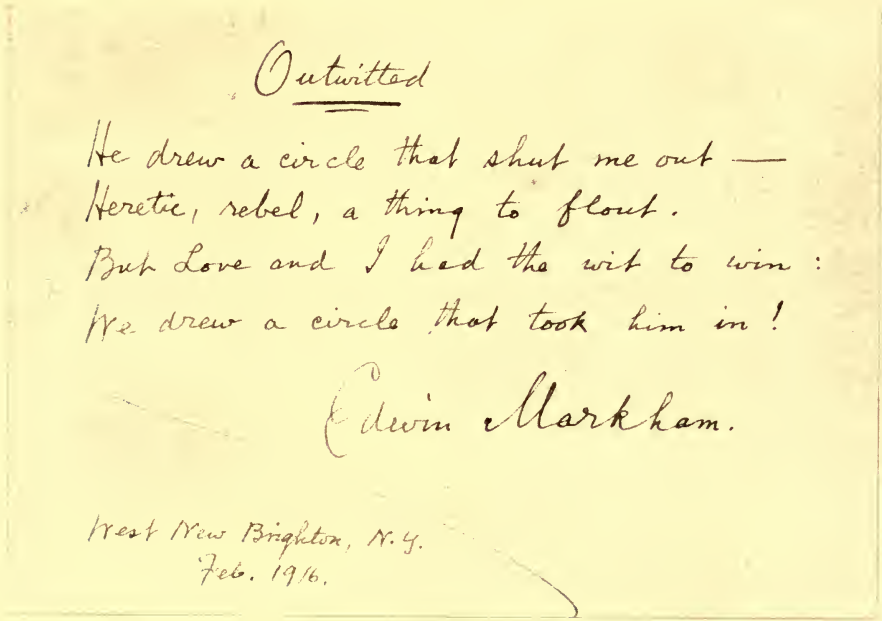
pressed Bailey Millard, then Sunday editor of the San Francisco Examiner, that he secured the manuscript for publication in his paper. The day it appeared correspondents of several Eastern newspapers telegraphed it to their journals and it was cabled to London. Markham's name as a world poet was thus flashed over the land and under the sea, and in a single day he found himself famous!

This great poem — to my mind the finest thing that has been produced in American literature since the Civil War — consists of five stanzas, of which I will quote here the first and fourth, merely to give an idea of the quality of the verse and its large number of unforgetable lines:

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down that brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

* * *

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;



Outwitted

He drew a circle that shut me out —
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

Edwin Markham.

West New Brighton, N. Y.
Feb. 1916.

FACSIMILE OF AN AUTOGRAPH COPY OF A QUATRAIN FROM EDWIN MARKHAM'S "THE SHOES OF HAPPINESS"

Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

Markham is not a poet of occasions, although some of his best work, like his *Lincoln*, was written for anniversary celebrations. He does not write until the spirit moves him. Hence the gap of more than a decade between his second and third books of verse. He does not always reach the height toward which he aims, but it can be said for his work that it maintains a higher level than the work of any other living American poet. Some may prefer Whitcomb Riley, but to me Markham seems to sound a finer note of a broader humanity than the Hoosier poet, sweet and wholesome and genuine as is all Riley's work. In other words, Markham is what the late Alfred Russell Wallace so aptly called him, "the greatest poet of the Social Passion that has yet appeared in the world."

Markham seems to feel the woes of the heavy-laden as no other poet of our time has felt them. The burden of poverty, the hopelessness of the poor creatures who are always clinging to the slippery edge of the abyss of want and crime, the injustice of fate that keeps some of the finest natures

forever in bondage of debt — these are the themes which bring forth the lightning of his wrath, the thunder of his scorn. His heart is so moved by the spectacle of the world's unfortunates that he compels the reader's pity and tears. He loses all count of time and space when the spirit moves him. Hence his shortest lyric seems to have the freshness of the first morning, and there is none of the smell of the lamp on any of his work, no matter how careful may be the finish of the verse.

Without apparent effort Markham also seems to select the right word in every line and his rhymes are never awkward nor far-fetched. In fact, when he wears his singing robes and is under the spell of his powerful imagination, language seems to become plastic under his hands. He uses words as the potter uses the clay on his wheel, with a few deft movements making the shapeless lump take on varied forms of beauty. This power is seen more signally in *Virgilia* than in anything Markham has written. That poem breathes inspiration in every line, and it has a sweep of imagination, a wealth of imagery and a rare kind of prophetic power that bears one along to the noble end.

In *Virgilia* the poet gives a fine conception of the meeting of his first self with his soul-mate, the woman who was formed to feed his imagination and to give him courage to struggle against fate, and then of his fruitless quest for her throughout the ages. Here are a few lines from the conclusion of this poem, with the splendid sweep of the verse:

I will go out where the sea-birds travel,
And mix my soul with the wind and the sea;
Let the green waves weave and the gray rains ravel,
And the tides go over me.

The sea is the mother of songs and sorrows,
And out of her wonder our wild loves come;
And so it will be through the long tomorrows,
Till all our lips are dumb.

She knows all sighs and she knows all sinning,
And they whisper out in her breaking wave;
She has known it all since the far beginning,
Since the grief of that first grave.

She shakes the heart with her stars and thunder
And her soft, low word when the winds are late;
For the sea is Woman, the sea is Wonder —
Her other name is Fate!

* * *

Many of our poets, when they have caught the ear of the public, have hearkened to the voice of the publisher and have put forth poor work. But Markham has written only when the spirit moved him. Hence he has only three books of

verse to his credit: *The Man With the Hoe and Other Poems*, *Lincoln and Other Poems* and *The Shoes of Happiness and Other Poems*. Hence, also, there is no mediocre verse in these volumes.

It is not often that a poet has an opportunity to celebrate the State which gave him his inspiration as Markham has celebrated California. Though not born in the Far West, Markham spent all his early impressionable years in the country across the bay from San Francisco. There he learned what it was to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow, and there as a farmer's boy, he stored up those pictures of the heavens and the earth which give distinction to his verse. In *California, the Wonderful*, Markham has produced a unique book. It gives a mass of information about the resources, the history, the scenic beauty and the marvelous development of the Golden State, but all the prosaic details are touched with poetry. The man who witnessed these wonders was a poet, and he was unable to write this history in any other form than poetical prose. This book was prepared to let the world know what the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco was designed

to commemorate. When the great Exposition was fairly under way, Markham was invited to visit it and to write his impressions. He took the occasion to visit all parts of the State, and the reception that he received was so hearty and so enthusiastic that it quite overcame the modest poet. It showed him that the bard, unlike the prophet, might be honored in his own home.

The poet's other book of prose is *Children in Bondage*, a startling description of the many American industries in which young children are stunted and ruined, morally and physically, to satisfy the greed of parents and employers.

Markham's hair is white but his eyes are keen and his voice is vibrant with strength and feeling. So we may expect more poems from his pen that will help the world to live the spiritual life.

Bibliography

Notes of Standard Editions, with Lives, Sketches, Reminiscences and Criticisms.

THESE bibliographical notes have been prepared especially for the use of those who desire to make a study of the authors whose best works are discussed in this volume. They lay no claim to completeness, but they have been selected with an eye single to their helpfulness. Many fine articles on American authors are buried in the bound volumes of magazines, and to these the only key is Poole's Index, with its annex, which brings all references up to date. Of Emerson, Lowell, Hawthorne and Holmes full bibliographies have been printed in limited editions by Houghton, Mifflin Co. A Study of English Prose Writers *by J. S. Clark, gives excellent sketches of Irving, Hawthorne, Emerson, Lowell and Holmes.* American Prose Masters, *by W. C. Brownell, is also worth careful reading.*

EMERSON

Three editions of Emerson's complete works are printed by Houghton, Mifflin Co. — the *New Centenary*, the *Riverside*, and

the *Little Classic* — each complete in twelve volumes. The first has a biography and notes by Edward Waldo Emerson. These notes are also printed in the large type *Riverside Pocket Edition* recently issued by the same publishers, in twelve volumes, bound in flexible leather. The volumes in all of these editions are sold separately. Many of the essays are printed in separate form. The poems are in the single volume *Household Edition*. Among the mass of criticism and reminiscence of Emerson it is only possible here to indicate the best books and articles for the general reader. The best short estimate of Emerson is Oliver Wendell Holmes' *Life* in the American Men of Letters series. James Elliott Cabot wrote the authorized biography in two volumes and Edward Waldo Emerson, a son, wrote an interesting sketch, *Emerson in Concord*, and edited his father's works and the correspondence with John Stirling. Charles Eliot Norton edited correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson. Good estimates of Emerson's work and influence are Alexander Ireland's *Ralph Waldo Emerson, His Life, Genius and Writings;* A. Bronson Alcott's *Ralph Waldo Emerson; Philosopher and Seer;* Moncure D. Conway's *Emerson at Home and Abroad;* Joel Benton's *Emerson as a Poet;* F. B. Sanborn's *The Genius and Character of Emerson;* C. J. Woodbury's *Talks With Emerson;* Henry James' *Partial Portraits*, pp. 1-34. Among the mass of critical estimates may be named Lowell's chapter in *My Study Windows;* Howells in *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* and Augustine Birrell in *Obiter Dicta*, second series. Among magazine articles are "Emerson in the Lecture Room" by Annie M. Fields in ATLANTIC MONTHLY, June, 1883; "Emerson, Philosopher and Poet," by A. H. Guernsey in APPLETON'S; "Emerson and Concord," by M. A. De Wolfe Howe, in the BOOKMAN, November, 1897; "Homes and Haunts of Emerson," by F. B. Sanborn, in SCRIBNER'S, February, 1879; and E. P. Whipple's "Recollections," in HARPER'S, September, 1882. *A Bibliography of Emerson* by George Willis Cooke is the most complete work of its kind, with a list of biographies, letters, reminiscences, notices and criticisms. *Emerson, Poet and Thinker* by Elisabeth Luther Cary is a good outline study and well illustrated.

WHITMAN

Mitchell Kennerley is the present publisher of Walt Whitman's works, having taken over the authorized editions first issued in 1897 and 1898, by Small, Maynard & Co. These

include *Complete Leaves of Grass* and *Complete Prose Works*, each in one volume. Mr. Kennerley also owns the plates of the *Camden Edition*, ten volumes, published in 1902 in New York, which contained much biographical and critical matter by O. L. Triggs. Two of Whitman's literary executors, Horace Traubel and Dr. R. M. Bucke, have thrown much light on Whitman's last years. Dr. Bucke edited *Calamus*, a series of Whitman's letters to Peter Doyle, the young car conductor whom the old poet loved as a son. Dr. Bucke also wrote an authorized biography of Whitman. W. D. O'Connor in *The Good Gray Poet* made an eloquent defense of Whitman after his discharge from the Indian Department. Probably the book which gives one the best idea of Whitman is Horace Traubel's *With Walt Whitman in Camden* — a record of daily talks with the old poet in 1888. This is now published by Mitchell Kennerley. The best short sketch is *Walt Whitman: His Life and Work*, by Bliss Perry in the American Men of Letters series. Other good books are *Walt Whitman: A Study*, by J. Addington Symonds; *Reminiscences of Walt Whitman*, by W. S. Kennedy. Critical estimates may be found in Stedman's *Poets of America*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, and Dowden's *Studies in Literature*. Some of the best magazine articles on Whitman are as follows: E. C. Stedman, SCRIBNER'S, volume 21; W. S. Kennedy, NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, 138; G. C. Macaulay, NINETEENTH CENTURY, 52; C. D. Lanier, CHAUTAUQUAN, 15; John Burroughs, CRITIC, 20; DIAL, 14, "Relations to Science"; NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, 154, "The Poet of Democracy"; H. S. Traubel, ARENA, 15, "Conversations with Walt Whitman"; W. S. Kennedy, NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, 138, "Poet Lore," 7; "Walt Whitman and Emerson"; M. D. Conway, OPEN COURT, 6.

IRVING

G. P. Putnam was Irving's only American publisher. So well was the author satisfied with his treatment that when the publisher was in financial straits and offered to sell the copyrights to Irving, the author refused, and waived all his royalties until Putnam was once more in prosperous circumstances. The standard editions are still published by the Putnams'. Among these are the *New Knickerbocker Edition*, in forty volumes, and the *New Handy Volume Edition*, on Bible paper, in twelve volumes. Many of the single works are published in finely

illustrated editions, and all of them may be had separately in the Putnam editions. His nephew, Pierre M. Irving, wrote *The Life and Letters*, in four volumes. The monograph, *Washington Irving*, in the American Men of Letters series, was written by Charles Dudley Warner. Good estimates of Irving may be found in these works: G. P. Putnam's *Personal Reminiscences;* T. B. Shaw's *A Manual of English Literature;* E. Dowden's *Studies in Literature;* F. H. Underwood's *Handbook of English Literature;* J. Scott Clark's *A Study of English Prose Writers;* H. A. Beers' *Initial Studies in American Letters;* Donald G. Mitchell in ATLANTIC MONTHLY, volume 13; G. P. Lathrop in SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY, volume 11; C. Cook in the CENTURY MAGAZINE, volume 12.

POE

The standard edition of Edgar Allan Poe's works was issued in 1894–95 in Chicago by Stone & Kimball, in ten volumes, with memoir by G. E. Woodberry and prefaces by E. C. Stedman. This edition has since been published by Charles Scribner's Sons. Two excellent editions, edited by Prof. Richardson of Dartmouth, containing a fine series of illustrations after paintings by Mr. F. S. Coburn, are published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. *The Life of Edgar Allan Poe* by George E. Woodberry is an excellent biography issued in two well illustrated volumes. *The Life and Letters of Poe*, by James A. Harrison (1903), gives many new facts and corrects numerous misstatements. Poe's poems and his leading short stories are issued in many forms. His tales have had a greater success in France than in his own country. Rufus W. Griswold, who wrote the first memoir of Poe, had a bitter pen, and he stirred up controversies over Poe's actions and character that were not ended for a half-century. Among magazine articles on Poe may be named: R. H. Stoddard, HARPER'S, 45; John Burroughs, DIAL, 15; Julian Hawthorne, LIPPINCOTT'S, 48, "My Adventure with Poe"; G. P. Lathrop, SCRIBNER'S, 11; S. A. T. Weiss, SCRIBNER'S, 15, "Last Days of Poe"; W. F. Gill, ARENA, 22, "After Fifty Years"; H. W. Mabie, OUTLOOK, 62; ATLANTIC, 84, "Poe's Place in American Literature"; E. L. Didier, BOOKMAN, 16, "Cult of Poe"; J. F. Carter, LIPPINCOTT'S, 70, "Last Night in Richmond"; Edwin Markham, ARENA, 32, "Poetry of Poe"; H. Scheffauer, OVERLAND, 53, "The Baiting of Poe"; S. Strunsky, NATION, 88, "Popularity of Poe"; Walt Whitman, CRITIC, 2, "Significance of Poe."

HAWTHORNE

The standard edition of Hawthorne is published by Houghton, Mifflin Co., in thirteen volumes, edited with an introduction by Horace E. Scudder and with bibliographical notes by George P. Lathrop. The *Graylock Edition*, in handy volume form, bound in flexible leather or cloth, twenty-two volumes, has been issued recently by the same publishers, and is sold separately or in the set. His son Julian wrote the authorized biography in *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*. Julian also wrote *Hawthorne and His Circle*, and edited the love letters of his father and his mother, which show how much Hawthorne depended upon his wife's criticism and what great service she rendered in stimulating his genius. Among reminiscences may be named *Personal Recollections of Hawthorne* by Horatio Bridge, a college chum and lifelong friend; *Memoirs of Hawthorne* by Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, a daughter; and *Nathaniel Hawthorne* by Annie Fields, widow of the publisher. Among critical estimates are Moncure D. Conway's *Life* in the Great Writers Series; George E. Woodberry's *Nathaniel Hawthorne* in the American Men of Letters series (the best short sketch and estimate); *The Life and Genius of Nathaniel Hawthorne* by Frank Preston Stearns; Henry James' sketch in English Men of Letters series (a very unsatisfactory piece of work); Sir Leslie Stephen's chapter in *Hours in a Library*; James T. Field's "Our Whispering Gallery" in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY from February to May, 1871, noteworthy as containing a passage descriptive of Lincoln which was omitted from Hawthorne's article in the ATLANTIC about his visit to Washington. Nina E. Browne's *Bibliography of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1905) is a remarkable work, as it represents the labor of sixteen years. It covers the whole field of American and European biographical and critical articles. Howells in *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* says of Hawthorne: "He left a legacy which in its kind is the finest the race has received from any mind."

COOPER

Cooper's works fill thirty-two volumes in the Household Edition issued by Houghton, Mifflin Co., with introductions to many volumes by Susan Fenimore Cooper. The Leatherstocking Tales and the Sea Tales each occupy five volumes. To those who wish a distinctly larger type, the *Knickerbocker Edition*, in thirty-three volumes, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, will

prove attractive. The same plates are used in printing the less expensive *Mohawk Edition*, which is sold in separate volumes or in the full set. The most popular of the Leatherstocking Tales is *The Last of the Mohicans*. Thomas R. Lounsberry has written an excellent sketch of Cooper for The American Men of Letters series, and M. A. De Wolfe Howe makes a good estimate in the series American Bookmen. W. E. Henley wrote the article on Cooper in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, but it is marred by his lack of knowledge of American life and his severe strictures on Cooper's criticisms of English life and character. Henley fails to bring out Cooper's intimate knowledge of the Indian and his remarkable power of describing the primeval forest of America. Good estimates of Cooper may be found in SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY for April, 1906, by W. C. Brownell; AMERICAN BOOKMAN for 1898 by M. A. De Wolfe Howe, and in the introduction to the Macmillan (English) edition of Cooper (1901) by Morris Mowbray. Here are some magazine articles by critics on Cooper's work: S. L. Clemens, NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, 16, "Literary Offenses of Cooper"; M. A. De Wolfe Howe, BOOKMAN, 5; H. A. Beers, CRITIC, 15; S. F. Cooper, ATLANTIC, 59; E. E. Hale, Jr., SEWANEE, 18.

LONGFELLOW

The standard edition of Longfellow is the Riverside in eleven volumes, but the one most convenient and serviceable is the *Cambridge Edition* in one volume. Both of these are published by Houghton, Mifflin Co. The best short life is T. W. Higginson's in the American Men of Letters series. Eric S. Robertson has contributed a life to the English series Great Writers. The *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, with Extracts from His Journals and Correspondence*, by Samuel Longfellow, is very full and complete. A supplemental volume, *Final Memorials*, contains the journals and letters of the last fifteen years of Longfellow's life. Of reminiscence there is a mass, as Longfellow was the most accessible of all the New England authors. He never refused to see a caller or to give his autograph. The best sketch of Longfellow's later life is in Howells' *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*. Among critical articles may be mentioned: E. P. Whipple, *Essays and Reviews;* E. C. Stedman, *Poets of America;* W. E. Henley, *Views and Reviews;* F. H. Underwood, *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow;* H. E. Scudder, *Men and Letters;* Howells, NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, volume 104;

R. H. Stoddard, SCRIBNER'S, volume 17; G. W. Curtis, HARPER'S, volume 65; Stedman, CENTURY, volume 4; O. W. Holmes, ATLANTIC, volume 49; T. W. Higginson, NATION, volume 34.

LOWELL

Lowell's works fill eleven volumes and are issued by Houghton, Mifflin Co. His prose is issued in seven volumes. The Life, in two volumes (1901), was written by Horace E. Scudder who also contributed the sketch of two pages in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. *Letters of James Russell Lowell*, edited by Charles Eliot Norton, appeared in two volumes in 1899 from the Harpers' press. *James Russell Lowell and His Friends*, by Edward Everett Hale, contains many reminiscences. Lives of Lowell have also been written by F. H. Underwood and Ferris Greenslet. Among critical estimates are Henry James' *Essays in London;* George Bancroft, "Our Ablest Critic," in LITERARY WORLD, June 27, 1885; Sarah K. Bolton, *Famous American Authors;* Royal Cortissoz, "Some Writers of Good Letters," CENTURY, March, 1897; Elbert Hubbard, *Little Journeys to Homes of Famous Authors*, volume ii; Hamilton Wright Mabie, *My Study Fire*, second series; Charles Dudley Warner, "The Real American at His Best," in LITERARY WORLD, volume 16; W. C. Wilkinson, SCRIBNER'S, volume 4; E. C. Stedman, CENTURY, volume 2; Henry James, ATLANTIC, volume 69; T. W. Higginson, NATION, volumes 53 and 57. The Bibliography of Lowell by GEORGE WILLIS COOKE gives all the editions and a mass of other material.

HOLMES

The complete works of Oliver Wendell Holmes, published by Houghton, Mifflin Co., fill fourteen volumes, with Notes by the author. A popular edition is issued in eight volumes. His poems come in one volume, *Cambridge Edition*. The standard biography is *Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes* by James T. Morse. Sir Leslie Stephen wrote an essay which appears as introduction to the English Golden Treasury edition of *The Autocrat;* monographs on Holmes were written by William Sloane Kennedy and Emma E. Brown. A *Bibliography* by George B. Ives gives everything on the subject of Holmes and his works, as complete as Cooke's Emerson or Lowell. Among articles that discuss Holmes and his works may be mentioned:

W. D. Howells, *Literary Friends and Acquaintance;* E. C. Stedman, *Poets of America;* F. H. Underwood, SCRIBNER'S, May, 1879; Edward Everett Hale, "Personal Recollections," ARENA, December, 1895; E. P. Whipple, *Essays and Reviews;* J. G. Whittier, *Literary Recreations* (1872); C. F. Richardson, *American Literature.*

WHITTIER

The definitive *Riverside Edition* of Whittier's Works, revised by himself, fills seven volumes, published by Houghton, Mifflin Co. (1894). His poems, edited by Horace E. Scudder, may be found in the convenient one volume *Cambridge Edition. The Life and Letters of Whittier*, written by his literary executor, Samuel T. Pickard, appeared in 1894. G. R. Carpenter wrote an excellent monograph on Whittier for the American Men of Letters series. Among books and articles on Whittier may be named: E. C. Stedman, *Poets of America;* F. H. Underwood, a monograph; E. P. Whipple, *Essays and Reviews;* Miss M. R. Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life;* J. L. and J. B. Gilder, "Authors at Home"; G. E. Woodberry, ATLANTIC, volume 70; H. P. Spofford, HARPER'S, volume 68; R. H. Stoddard, SCRIBNER'S, volume 18; J. V. Cheney, CHAUTAUQUAN, volume 16.

THOREAU

Thoreau's complete works are issued by Houghton, Mifflin Co. in eleven volumes, but many reprints of *Walden Excursions* and other popular volumes have been issued recently by other publishers, as the copyright has evidently expired. *Walden* has proved to be Thoreau's most popular book. Emerson wrote an introduction to *Excursions* which gives a good estimate of his friend's character. Frank B. Sanborn contributed a monograph on Thoreau to the American Men of Letters series and H. S. Salt wrote a Life which appeared in London in 1890. Some readable reminiscences are given by William Ellery Channing in *The Poet Naturalist.* Critical estimates of Thoreau's work and influence may be found in Lowell's *My Study Windows* and Stevenson's *Familiar Studies in Men and Books.*

PARKMAN

The complete works of Francis Parkman are brought out by Little, Brown & Co. of Boston. The *New Library Edition*

is in thirteen volumes, and includes the *Life* by C. H. Farnham. The *Popular Edition* is in twelve volumes. A desirable form is the *Pocket Edition* in twelve volumes, bound in limp morocco, recently issued. Parkman's most popular books are *The Overland Trail* and *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*. The *Life of Francis Parkman*, by G. H. Farnham (1900), gives a good account of the tremendous work accomplished by this literary recluse, who was nearly blind and an invalid for over twenty years. John Fiske, in an article on Parkman in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclæpedia Britannica*, says: "With all its manifold instructiveness his work is a narrative as entertaining as those of Macaulay or Froude. In judicial impartiality Parkman may be compared to Gardiner, and for accuracy and learning with Stubbs." Among magazine articles are John Fiske, ATLANTIC, 73; Justin Winsor, ATLANTIC, 73; J. R. Lowell, CENTURY, 23; M. A. De Wolfe Howe, BOOKMAN, 5; E. L. Godkin, NATION, 71; J. B. Gilder, CRITIC, 23; F. H. Underwood, LIVING AGE, 177; W. E. Simonds, DIAL, 37.

MARK TWAIN

The standard edition of Mark Twain's works is issued by the Harpers, and in uniform style is also published the *Life of Mark Twain*, by Albert Bigelow Paine, his secretary for many years, and his literary executor. The *Limp Leather Edition*, recently published by the Harpers, in twenty-four volumes, is a convenient and attractive form. Mark Twain's early books were all brought out in subscription editions, with extraordinary illustrations in old-fashioned wood-cuts. These were gathered up in 1899 and issued in twenty-two volumes by the American Publishing Co. of Hartford. By the aid of H. H. Rodgers, Mark Twain was able to secure the copyrights of these books and to turn them over to the Harpers. The most popular of all Twain's books is *The Innocents Abroad*. Next to this probably comes *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Brander Matthews, in an article on Mark Twain in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, says: "In *Tom Sawyer*, *Huck Finn* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* there are not only humor and pathos, character and truth, but there is also the largeness of outlook on life such as we find only in the works of the masters." W. D. Howells, after Mark Twain's death, contributed a series of articles to HARPER'S MAGAZINE on his dead friend, which were afterward printed in book form under the title, *My Mark Twain*.

In this book Howells has given the best picture of the great humorist, who was great also as a delineator of the life and character of the Southwest. In *Essays on Books*, William Lyon Phelps has an excellent chapter on Mark Twain. Here are some magazine articles on Mark Twain: J. H. Twichell, HARPER'S, 92; W. P. Trent, BOOKMAN, 3, "As a Historical Novelist"; Dan De Quille, CALIFORNIA MAGAZINE, 4, "As Reporter in San Francisco"; R. W. Gilder, OUTLOOK, 8, "Spoken and Written Art of Mark Twain"; Andrew Lang, CRITIC, 19, "Art of Mark Twain"; A. B. Paine, HARPER'S, 118, "Clemens at Stormfield"; Bailey Millard, BOOKMAN, 31, "Mark Twain in San Francisco"; Harry T. Peck, BOOKMAN, 31, "His Place in Literature."

BRET HARTE

Houghton Mifflin Co. publish the standard *Riverside Edition* of Bret Harte's works. The same firm has issued recently the *Overland Edition*, in handy volume style, bound in flexible leather. Both sets come in nineteen volumes and are sold separately. H. W. Boynton in a volume in the Contemporary Men of Letters series, gives a good sketch of Harte's life and work. T. Edgar Pemberton's *Life of Bret Harte* is noteworthy as giving the only record of the life of the Californian short-story writer and poet in Scotland and England. Pemberton was a close friend of Harte's during all his life abroad, and wrote several plays in collaboration with him. His book contains many of Harte's letters to his wife and friends, and it shows the high regard in which Harte was held by many famous English authors. The portraits and illustrations are very interesting. Henry C. Merwin's *Bret Harte* is an important biography. *A Tramp Through the Bret Harte Country*, by Thomas Dykes Beasley, gives an excellent sketch of the region made famous by Harte's stories.

HOWELLS

William Dean Howells has been one of the most prolific of American writers. His works, partly issued in Boston, the remainder by the Harpers in New York, fill over fifty volumes, not counting the large number of critical articles contributed to the ATLANTIC and other magazines, which have never been reprinted in book form. Howells has been the subject of a large

number of magazine articles, among which the following may be mentioned: Brander Matthews, FORUM, 32, "As a Critic"; H. H. Boyesen, COSMOPOLITAN, 12, "Howells and His Work"; T. C. Crawford, CRITIC, 21, "Literary Methods of William Dean Howells"; Harriet W. Preston, ATLANTIC, 91; J. P. Mowbray, CRITIC, 42; Hamlin Garland, NEW ENGLAND MAGAZINE, 2; William Sharp, ACADEMY, 37; Lillian Whiting, AUTHOR, 3, "Howells at Home"; Van Wyck Brooks, WORLD'S WORK, 18, "Howells at Work at 72"; SCRIBNER'S, 13, "As a Country Printer." Professor William Lyon Phelps in his *Essays on Books* has a fine chapter on Howells in which he brings out his literary art and his profound Americanism.

MARKHAM

Edwin Markham's works, published by Doubleday, Page & Co., are as follows: The *Man With the Hoe, and Other Poems; The Man With the Hoe, with Notes by the Author*, an extremely interesting little book, as it contains the poet's own account of the origin of the poem; *Lincoln, and Other Poems. The Shoes of Happiness, and Other Poems*; *California the Wonderful*, finely illustrated, and *Children in Bondage: The Child Labor Problem.* Bailey Millard has contributed a number of articles to THE BOOKMAN in regard to Markham, and his work, and Poole's Index gives references to the controversy which raged in the various magazines over *The Man With the Hoe*, soon after its appearance. Among magazine articles on Markham are: Yone Noguchi, NATIONAL MAGAZINE, volume 21; B. O. Flower, ARENA, 27, "A Prophet and Poet of the Fraternal State" Henry Meade Bland, OVERLAND, 50, "Markham and His Art."

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